

Pleasure and Leisure in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age

Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture



Edited by
Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge

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Pleasure and Leisure in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age



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on Toys, Games, and Entertainment

Edited by
Albrecht Classen

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Hans Memling, Passion Altar ("Greveradenaltar"), 1491, originally in the Lübeck Cathedral, now in the Saint Ann's Museum, Lübeck, Germany. Detail showing three Roman soldiers (they appear more like early modern courtiers) casting lots for Christ's garments. © Albrecht Classen, 2019.

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Albrecht Classen

Pleasure and Leisure from the Middle Ages to the early Nineteenth Century

The Rediscovery of a Neglected Dimension in Cultural History.
Also an Introduction

“Des wil ich mich ziehen an die Romer. Die haben es selbes getan vnd haben das ire kinder gelernet, das sie liebe in eren haben solten, turnieren, stechen, tanzen, wetlaufen, springen vnd allerlei zuchtige hubscheit treiben solten bei mussiger weile auf die rede, das sie die weile bosheit weren vberhaben” (Johannes von Saaz [Tepl], *Der Ackermann*, ca. 1401, ch. 23; ed. Günther Jungblut, 1969 https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/15Jh/Tepl/tepl_tod.html).

[Let me refer to the Romans as role models. They themselves did it and also taught their children to love honorable behavior and to embrace the idea that they should pursue entertainment through tournaments, jousts, dancing, competitive running, leaping, and all kinds of other acceptable activities during their leisure time so that they would be free from evil thoughts.]

(Here I have used my my own translation; but see also <http://www.michaelhaldane.com/HusbandmanandDeath>)

Global Perspectives on the *homo ludens*

People throughout time, both old and young, men and women, have always searched for various types of entertainment and games, and despite the allegedly superficial character of ‘playfulness’ and the seemingly simple ‘enjoyment,’ the opportunity to spend one’s time more leisurely and/or filled with excitement has traditionally assumed a high reputation even for the social elites, if not especially among them, because game playing is a form of theoretical reflection on and practice of the countless options and opportunities in life. The elites, above all other social classes, tend to have the necessary resources and free time to pursue pleasures, but this does not mean that the members of other social classes were doing nothing but work or slaving away, neither in the Middle Ages nor in our own time.

Entertainment makes it possible for the player to move away from the hardship and constraints of reality while challenging him/her in an artificial frame-

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work without exposing the player to the real implications of the actions.¹ Those, however, are predicated on the concrete conditions in our existence, imitating and refracting them according to changing sets of rules. Life thus proves to be a game, as we might say, and it is our challenge to learn the rules in order to participate in that game as well as possible so that both we ourselves and our playing partners can have a fulfilled and happy time, getting ready for the reality outside of the game where the various options have been played out in a rather random fashion, or determined by extra rules and regulations.

For the purpose of being as inclusive as possible and in order to avoid terminological confusion, subsequently I will not sharply differentiate between entertainment, games, gaming, play (not in the sense of drama, or stage perfor-

1 Sophie Caflisch, *Spielend lernen: Spiel und Spielen in der mittelalterlichen Bildung*. Vorträge und Forschungen, Sonderbände, 58 (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2018), highlights how much didactic literature, accounts about tournaments, narratives dealing with chess games etc. all addressed critical issues of social, political, economic, and religious conditions. All those ludic activities essentially contributed to the education of young noble people. See also Patrick Leiske, *Höfisches Spiel und tödlicher Ernst: Das Bloßfechten mit dem langen Schwert in den deutschsprachigen Fechtbüchern des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2018). For historical studies of the tournament, see *Das Ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter: Beiträge zu einer vergleichenden Formen- und Verhaltensgeschichte des Rittertums*, ed. Josef Fleckenstein. Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 80 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985); Richard Barber and Juliet Barker, *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (1989; Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1989; reprinted numerous times); David Crouch, *Tournament* (London and New York: Hambledon and Continuum, 2005). As to the depiction of tournaments in high medieval romances, see Peter Czerwinski, "Die Schlacht- und Turnierdarstellungen in den deutschen höfischen Romanen des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts: zur literarischen Verarbeitung militärischer Formen des adligen Gewaltmonopols," Ph.D. Freie Universität Berlin, 1975. See also the compact and highly valuable article by F. Cardini, Ph. Contamine, A. Ranft, and P. Schreiner, "Turnier," *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 8 (Munich: Artemis Verlag, 1999), 1113–18. For a discussion of the tournament field, see Silke Winst, "Schlachtfeld, Turnierplatz," *Literarische Orte in deutschsprachigen Erzählungen des Mittelalters: Ein Handbuch*, ed. Tilo Renz, Monika Hanauska, and Mathias Herweg (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 459–75. The importance of tournaments for early modern society is confirmed by a significant account from 1566: Sigmund Feyrabent, *Thurnier Buch: Von Anfang, Vrsachen, Vrsprung vnd Herkommen der Thurnier im Heyligen Römischen Reich Teutscher Nation, wie viel öffentlicher Landthurnier von Keyser Heinrich dem Ersten dieses Namens an biss auff den jetztregierenden Keyser Maximilian* (Frankfurt a. M.: Feyrabent und Hüter, 1566); online at: <http://www.archive.org/stream/thurnierbuchvona00ruxn#page/n27/mode/2up> (last accessed on June 1, 2018). See also the contribution to this volume by Allan V. Murray. I will refer to tournaments a number of times in various contexts, obviously because they assumed such a central role in medieval and early modern society. For the social, economic, intellectual, moral, and religious ramifications of games within pre-modern cultural conditions, see the contribution to this volume by Scott L. Taylor.

mance), leisure (activities), and even playfulness since all those aspects overlap and mirror a fundamental concern in human existence to experiment playfully with alternative conditions and to operate there on the new playing field, whether a tournament camp, a soccer stadium, a volleyball court, a chessboard, a card game, etc. Playing can take place in physical, intellectual, and spiritual fashion, and both the arts and literature have regularly created the fundamental platform where individuals could experiment and create a playful situation.² We have also realized that game underlies most intra-human interactions, both in politics and in economic relations, although in this context we move to a very global definition of game as part of the universal dimension of entertainment, pleasure, and leisure. Many studies that seemingly address this larger topic in reality are mostly concerned with humor, laughter, jokes, satire, or irony.³ The central question

² See the contributions to *Giving People Ideas – Text and Concept: Literary Texts as Thought Experiments*, ed. Susanne Kord, Ernest Schonfield, and Godela Weiss-Sussex. Publications of the English Goethe Society, N.S., 80 (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2011); cf. also Walter Haug, *Die Wahrheit der Fiktion: Studien zur weltlichen und geistlichen Literatur des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2003); Robert Eisenhauer, *Paradox and Perspicacity: Horizons of Knowledge in the Literary Text. Studies on Themes and Motifs in Literature*, 76 (New York, Washington, DC, et al.: Peter Lang, 2005); Sophia Alt, Caterina Brand, and Vanessa Haazipolo, “Literatur als Gedankenexperiment – Grenzen und Chancen einer Perspektive,” *Journal of Literary Theory* (March 2017): 1–8. They summarize the major gist of a conference focused on the question how to approach literature through this lens: “Erklärtes Ziel der Tagung war dabei, nicht allein über, sondern ‘mit Literatur [zu] philosophier[en]’, um die Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des Begriffs des literarischen Gedankenexperiments auszutesten” (The declared goal of this conference was not only to ‘philosophize’ about, but also with literature in order to test out the possibilities and limits of the term of the literary thought experiment). In her keynote address, Catherine Z. Elgin approached literature as “Imaginative Exploits, Epistemic Rewards” (thus her title). Other contributors criticized her approach as too vague and leaning toward trivialization of literature at large, which is not at all the case. Moreover, the charge was that literature does not contain any propositionalen Wahrheitswerte” (Gottfried Gabriel; propositional truth value), but in essence, I believe, we can embrace Elgin’s concept as a rather useful heuristic concept that gives literature a new level of meaning. See also Catherine Z. Elgin, “Fiction as Thought Experiment,” *Perspectives on Science* 22.2 (2014): 221–41. For a summary of the individual papers, see <http://www.jltonline.de/index.php/conferences/article/view/910/2083> (last accessed on Aug. 11, 2018).

³ Ken Binmore, *Game Theory and the Social Contract*. MIT Press Series on Economic Learning and Social Evolution (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994); *Frontiers of Dynamic Games: Game Theory and Management*, St. Petersburg, 2017, ed. Leon A. Petrosyan, Vladimir V. Mazalov, and Nikolay Zenkevich (Cham: Springer International Publishing, Birkhäuser, 2018); *Game Theory: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice* (Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2018). This is a big topic in sociology, mathematics, philosophy, and related fields. Intriguingly, pre-modern studies can easily connect with this approach, drawing from their own materials and also the theoretical models developed in modern times. For a typical example of a collected volume that seems

will be what constituted or produced entertainment in the pre-modern world and what significance leisure activities could have had in their wide range of social, political, economic, and religious contexts. Whereas previous scholars in the field of Cultural Studies have only tentatively begun to explore the wide field of games, recent years have witnessed a new and heightened interest in this topic, although we often face the dilemma that the material dimension (toys, board games, dice, dolls, etc.) blinds us to the theoretical reflections truly necessary in order to gain a new and more insightful understanding of the issue at stake, as suggested by Ludwig Wittgenstein and Charles Sanders Peirce in their semiological concepts, identifying game as another form of representation of social reality.⁴

to address the same topic as the present book, see *The Playful Middle Ages: Meanings of Play and Plays of Meaning: Essays in Memory of Elaine C. Block*, ed. Paul Hardwick. Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, 23 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010). The issues there concern mostly visual, i.e., art-historical documents reflecting grotesque human actions, laughable situations, foolishness, scatological language, satirical art works such as misericords or sculptures, embossed boxes, and other objects. This is, bluntly put, not a book about plays or games in practical or theoretical terms, despite the promising title. It is a book about humor, comedy, fun, satire, etc. Modern historians also tend to use the term 'pleasure' for a variety of purposes that, at closer analysis, have hardly anything to do with 'pleasure' in a cultural-historical context; see, for instance, Rachel Plotnick, *Power Button: A History of Pleasure, Panic, and the Politics of Pushing* (Cambridge, MA, and London: The MIT Press, 2018). This is a study on the introduction of buttons for all kinds of gadgets to set them into motion or to activate them at the time of the introduction of electricity from 1880 to 1925.

⁴ The most authoritative study proves to be David Parlett, *The Oxford History of Board Games* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), who focuses, however, mostly on the practical side of the various games and is less interested in the historical, cultural, and political function of games; for more metaphorical concepts of games, see Ernst Strouhal, "Politische Partien: Zur Instrumentalisierung von Brettspielen am Beispiel *Schach*, *Monopoly* und *Gänsepiel*," *Games of Empire: Kulturhistorische Konnotationen von Brettspielen in transnationalen und imperialen Kontexten*, ed. Karen Aydin, Martina Ghosh-Schellhorn, Heinrich Schlange-Schöningen, and Mario Ziegler. Transcultural Anglophone Studies, 5 (Münster, Berlin, et al.: LIT Verlag, 2018), 236–60; cf. also Rudy Koshar, *Histories of Leisure. Leisure, Consumption and Culture* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002); see also the contributions to *A Handbook of Leisure Studies*, ed. Chris Rojek (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, ed. with an intro. and notes by Martha Banta (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). As much as modern cultural historians and sociologists assume that leisure represents essentially a phenomenon that emerged only since ca. 1800, both pleasure and leisure were of central importance already much earlier. For the modernist perspective, see the contributions to *New Directions in Urban History: Aspects of European Art, Health, Tourism and Leisure since the Enlightenment*, ed. Peter Borsay. Münsteraner Schriften zur Volkskunde, europäische Ethnologie, 5 (Münster, Munich, et al.: Waxmann, 2000).

We are dealing here with leisure and pleasure in their myriad of manifestations because human life is not only determined by work, eating, sleeping, or procreation, but also by free-time activities, playing, or relaxing in a deliberately non-productive fashion, which was, according to Thorstein Veblen, primarily a privilege of the upper class.⁵ Historically speaking, in order to comprehend human culture, we must not ignore what happens when people are not working, not engaged in war, not attending mass, or are not involved in harvesting, for instance, if we think of the peasant population.⁶ Gaming and other forms of entertainment are as old as human culture and have always represented a unique form of social interaction freed from serious consequences. As soon as a society has achieved a level of security and wealth, having enough resources available to carve out free time for its individual members, the components of pleasure and

5 Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1934; New York: New American Library, 1953); John Neulinger, *To Leisure: An Introduction* (Ann Arbor, MI: Allyn and Bacon, 1981); John Kelly, *Leisure*, 3rd ed. (1982; Boston and London: Allyn and Bacon, 1996); Stephen J. Page and Joanne Connell, *Leisure: An Introduction* (Harlow, England: Financial Times Prentice Hall, 2010); Peter Bramham and Stephen Wagg, *An Introduction to Leisure Studies: Principles and Practice* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2014). The entire theory of leisure, as originally developed by Veblen, would deserve an extensive discussion from a sociological-historical perspective; see Warren J. Samuels, *The Anthem Companion to Thorstein Veblen*, ed. Sidney Plotkin (London: Anthem Press, 2018).

6 See, for instance, the contributions to *Amusement und Risiko: Dimensionen des Spiels in der spanischen und italienischen Aufklärung*, ed. Robert Fajen. Interdisziplinäres Zentrum für die Erforschung der Europäischen Aufklärung: Kleine Schriften des IZEA, 6 (Halle a.d. Saale: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2015). Already in the eighteenth century scholars realized how important the metaphor of game could be for all human cultures; see Samuel Friedrich Günther, Wahl, *Der Geist und die Geschichte des Schach-Spiels bei den Indern, Persern, Arabern, Türken, Sinesen und übrigen Morgenländern, Deutschen und anderen Europäern* (1798; Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der DDR, 1981). As to the social context of late medieval plays, see, for instance, Rainer H. Schmid, *Raum, Zeit und Publikum des geistlichen Spiels: Aussage und Absicht eines mittelalterlichen Massenmediums* (Munich: Tuduv-Verlags-Gesellschaft, 1975). As to games in the Renaissance, see Andrew Leibs, *Sports and Games of the Renaissance* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004). For broader theoretical reflections on game, see the contributions to *Theorien des Spiels*, ed. Hans Scheuerl. 10th expanded and rev. ed. Beltz-Studienbuch, 88 (1964; Weinheim: Beltz, 1975). Hans Scheuerl, in his seminal study concerning the pedagogical dimension of play, *Das Spiel: Untersuchungen über sein Wesen, seine pädagogischen Möglichkeiten und Grenzen*. 11th ed. (1954; Weinheim: Beltz, 1990), 347–48, argues that game is determined by ambivalence, freedom, a relative compactness of the internal structure, and an awareness about time set apart from normal time. See now also *Ambivalenzen des geistlichen Spiels: Revisionen von Texten und Methoden*, ed. Jörn Bockmann and Regina Toepfer. Historische Semantik, 29 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018).

leisure enter the picture.⁷ As Paul Milliman has recently emphasized, addressing medieval culture at large, “games and pastimes permeated medieval society. ...” However, he also alerts us to the fundamental problem of how to research this issue: “more often than not, games are marginal ..., mentioned in passing, or serve as metaphors in works concerned mainly with other topics. Games and pastimes are everywhere and nowhere, so one must look for them in a wide range of sources.”⁸ Literary documents, as to be expected, offer themselves as important and fertile mirrors of everyday culture in which games and many other forms of entertainment assume a significant role.⁹ But there are also numerous visual depictions, musical compositions, and philosophical reflections that provide insight into this heretofore relatively neglected research field.¹⁰ Moreover, travelogues, pilgrimage accounts, and chronicles also contain valuable information about how free time was filled with a variety of activities in the pre-modern world.

⁷ Harold James Ruthven Murray, *A History of Board-Games Other than Chess* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952); David Sidney Parlett, *The Oxford History of Board Games* (see note 4). As to modern video games and related technology-based games, which have deeply impacted youth culture globally, see, for instance, Kevin Leyton-Brown and Yoav Shoham, *Essentials of Game Theory: A Concise Multidisciplinary Introduction*. Synthesis Lectures on Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, 3 (San Rafael: Morgan & Claypool Publishers, 2008); Carl Heinze, *Mittelalter Computer Spiele: zur Darstellung und Modellierung von Geschichte im populären Computerspiel*. Historische Lebenswelten in populären Wissenskulturen, 8 (Bielefeld: transcript, 2012); Andrew Williams, *History of Digital Games: Developments in Art, Design and Interaction* (Boca Raton, FL: Taylor & Francis, 2017). For a very useful overview of what games were played throughout time globally, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_games (last accessed on July 3, 2018).

⁸ Paul Milliman, “Games and Pastimes,” *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), vol. 1, 582–612; here 583. He addresses, above all, topics such as criticism and support of games, games as pedagogical aids, rules of and restrictions in games, places and times for playing and games, specific games, such as board, dice, and card games, then physical games such as tournaments, and games involving animals. He offers this concluding observation: “Rich and poor, old and young, men and women, clerics and lay people all found ways to entertain themselves with a wide variety of games and pastimes, but most of these have left little trace in the historical record” (612). As in the case of all other contributions to this *Handbook*, Milliman reviews a broad scope of the relevant research literature. See also his own contribution to this volume.

⁹ See the contributions to *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature*, ed. Serina Patterson. The New Middle Ages (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), dealing with chess, the *jeux-partis*, ludic runic readings, textual games, and similar aspects.

¹⁰ Cf. now Birkhan, *Spielendes Mittelalter* (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau, 2018); Milliman, “Games and Pastimes” (see note 8).

One of the ‘classical’ examples of how members of courtly society sought entertainment is provided by the Middle High German poet Hartmann von Aue in his ‘translation’ of Chrétien de Troyes’s *Yvain* from ca. 1160, *Iwein* (ca. 1200), where we encounter the company of King Arthur during the festive season of Pentecost. Every member of his court is dedicated to some kind of enjoyment because there is, so to speak, free time and everyone has complete freedom to do whatever it might please him or her. As the narrator lists them, some knights are chatting with ladies (65), some take care of their own well-being and appearance (66), some are dancing and singing (67), some are running and jumping for exercise (68), some are listening to the playing of string instruments (69), some are practicing shooting with bow and arrow (70), some are telling love stories (71), and others relate heroic adventures (72). King Arthur and his wife retire to their tent to take a nap, but less because they need a rest, as the narrator emphasizes, and more for giving each other some company (80–84). At the same time, four knights, Dodines and Gawein, Segremors and Iwein, along with the court seneschal Keii, form a group and listen to an extraordinary account told them by Kâlogrenant who a long time ago had experienced a most difficult time in a knightly encounter and then had failed to win a joust (92–95). The queen listens and finds this so intriguing that she gets up from bed and joins the company to hear more about this adventure (97–104).¹¹

The twelfth-century Cambro-Norman archdeacon of Brecon and historian, Gerald of Wales (ca. 1146–ca. 1323; also known as Giraldus Cambrensis), offers in his *Descriptio Cambriae* from ca. 1186 to 1188 (with several new editions in the following years) a detailed description of this country in its geophysical appearance, its history, and of the people’s culture. He highlights also that the people of Wales, in contrast to those in England, sing, whenever they meet at social

¹¹ Hartmann von Aue, *Iwein*, ed. G. F. Benecke and K. Lachmann, newly rev. by Ludwig Wolff. 7th ed. Vol. 1: *Text* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968); see also Hartmann von Aue, *Iwein. Mittelhochdeutsch/Neuhochdeutsch*, ed. and trans. Rüdiger Krohn. Commentary by Mireille Schnyder. Rev. ed. (2012; Stuttgart: Reclam, 2015); *Arthurian Romances, Tales, and Lyric Poetry: The Complete Works of Hartmann von Aue*, trans. with commentary by Frank Tobin, Kim Vivian, and Richard H. Lawson (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001). Scholarship has discussed this courtly romance already from many different perspectives; see, for instance, Gert Kaiser, *Textauslegung und gesellschaftliche Selbstdeutung: Die Artusromane Hartmanns von Aue*. Schwerpunkte Germanistik. 2nd newly rev. ed. (Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1978); Hubertus Fischer, *Ehre, Hof und Abenteuer in Hartmanns “Iwein”: Vorarbeiten zu einer historischen Poetik des höfischen Epos*. Forschungen zur Geschichte der älteren deutschen Literatur, 3 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1983). See also the contributions to *A Companion to the Works of Hartmann von Aue*, ed. Francis G. Gentry. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005).

gatherings, “their traditional songs, not in unison, as is done elsewhere, but in parts, in many modes and modulations. When a choir gathers to sing, which happens often in this country, you will hear as many different parts and voices as there are performers, all joining together in the end to produce a single organic harmony and melody in the soft sweetness of B-flat.”¹² As laudatory as this might be, the subsequent sections paint a rather negative picture of the Welsh at large. For our purposes, however, we can interpret this section as a strong confirmation of the fact that communal singing was a central means for people in those parts of the British Isles in the high Middle Ages to pursue pleasure and leisure and thereby to confirm their identity.

According to Gerald, the Welsh pursue their own characteristic style of singing, while the English enjoy communal singing in a different way: “the English who live there produce the same symphonic harmony when they sing. They do this in two parts only, with two modulations of the voice, one group humming the bass and the others singing the treble most sweetly” (242). In other words, singing as a public form of entertainment represented, for Gerald, an indication of a national character involving all the people, so when he remarks on where the English might have learned their style: “I think that these latter must have taken their part-singing, as they did their speech, from the Danes and Norwegians, who so often invaded those parts of the island and held them longer under their dominion” (243). If we widened our perspective, we could easily also include the dances and songs performed on the Faroe Islands in the North Atlantic from the fourteenth century until today, often replicating the heroic epic known as the *Nibelungenlied* and a variety of medieval ballads. The medieval tradition of public entertainment by means of poetic texts, dance, and music thus has continued there, far away from the rest of Europe, and this unabatedly.¹³

12 Gerald of Wales, *The Journey Through Wales and The Description of Wales*, trans. with an intro. by Lewis Thorpe (London: Penguin, 1978), 242. As to his biography, see Brynley F. Roberts, *Gerald of Wales*. Writers of Wales (s.l.: University of Wales Press, 1982); Michael A. Faletta, *Wales and the Medieval Colonial Imagination: The Matters of Britain in the Twelfth Century*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); see also Michelle P. Brown, “Gerald of Wales and the ‘Topography of Ireland’: Authorial Agendas in Word and Image,” *Journal of Irish Studies* 20 (2005): 52–63.

13 Klaus Fuss, *Die färöischen Lieder der Nibelungensage: Text, Lesarten und Übersetzung*. 3 vols. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 427–29 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1985–1987); Wolfgang Suppan, “Musikethnologische Forschungen auf den Färöer Inseln,” *Acta Musicologica* 49 (1977): 49–69. See also Ulrich Müller, “Die färöischen Tanzballaden: Ihr ‘Sitz im Leben’ 1985,” id., *Gesammelte Schriften zur Literaturwissenschaft*. Vol. 2: *Lyrik II, Epik, Autobiographie des Mittelalters*, ed. Margarete Springeth, Gertraud Mitterauer, and Ruth Weichselbaumer. Göp-

As we will see below, late medieval and early Renaissance poets similarly reflected extensively on the accounts of public entertainment and thus set up very comparable scenes where a group of story-tellers gets together and entertains each other with accounts of love, adventures, vice and virtue, etc. (Boccaccio, Chaucer, Kaufringer, Sacchetti, et al.), often combining their narratives with songs as interludes. It might be rather appropriate to identify some of the famous collections of medieval and early modern songs and love poetry, such as the *Carmina Burana* (ca. 1230/1240), as mirrors of intellectual and artistic entertainment insofar as those compositions reflect intricately how members of learned and/or ecclesiastic groups experimented with a variety of erotic, satirical, political, and religious issues, provoking each other to understand the subtle allusions and literary games, relying on deliberate ambivalence, irony, satire, and parody, and this not only in the poems/songs, but also in the religious plays.¹⁴ The thirteenth-century French *chanteubleu*, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, in its structure as a prosimetrum, adds to this observation quite meaningfully.¹⁵

pinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 750, II (1985; Göttingen: Kümmerle, 2010), 393–406; Marianne Clausen, *Føroya ljóð í kvæðum, vísum, sálrum og skjaldrum = Sound of the Faroes – Traditional Songs and Hymn* (Hoyvík: Stíðin, 2014).

14 *Carmina Burana*. Texte und Übersetzungen. Mit den Miniaturen aus der Handschrift und einem Aufsatz von Peter und Dorothee Diemer, ed. Benedikt Konrad Vollmann. Bibliothek des Mittelalters, 13 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1987). See now also *Carmina Burana*, ed. and trans. David A. Traill. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2018), which is allegedly marred, however, by some linguistic issues in the translation as Peter Godman claims who is currently preparing a new critical edition. For a contrastive view, see the review by Scott G. Bruce in *The Medieval Review* online, 19.01.08, who also highlights the study by Christopher de Hamel, *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts: Twelve Journeys into the Medieval World* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017), 330–75. There is much research literature on those songs; see, for instance, Sabina Tuzzo, *La poesia dei clerici vagantes: studi sui Carmina Burana*. Quaderni di Paideia, 18 (Cesena: Editrice Stilgraf, 2015); see also the contributions to *Parodie und Verkehrung: Formen und Funktionen spielerischer Verfremdung und spöttischer Verzerrung in Texten des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Seraina Plotke and Stefan Seeber. Encomia Deutsch, 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016); a new volume with studies on the *Carmina Burana* is currently being prepared by Henry Hope and Tristan E. Franklins. As to the plays in the *Carmina Burana*, see Christine Catharina Schnusenberg, *The Relationship between the Church and the Theater: Exemplified by Selected Writings of the Church Fathers and by Liturgical Texts until Amalarius of Metz, 775–852 A.D* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988).

15 Roger Pensom, *Aucassin et Nicolette: The Poetry of Gender and Growing Up in the French Middle Ages* (Bern, Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 1999); Albrecht Classen, “Aucassin et Nicolette,” *Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature*, ed. Jay Ruud (New York: Facts on File, 2005), 44–46; *Aucassin and Nicolette: A Facing-Page Edition and Translation* by Robert S. Sturges (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press 2015).

The literary and artistic representation of pleasure and leisure thus lends itself exceedingly well for a critical examination of the relations between ludic activities, physical and intellectual, and the more serious dimensions of pre-modern and early modern culture. Accordingly, the focus of this collection of articles rests on the question how people achieved entertainment through physical and intellectual activities, through listening to songs and epic poems, through dancing and playing games. But the focus will not rest only on the concrete objects of game, which previous and even very recent scholars have already begun to study closely, but also on the metaphorical, spiritual, political, and philosophical dimension of games and playing, and other forms of entertainment, in a social and cultural context. In contrast to some recent publications that address 'pleasure' in terms of emotions, as a learning experience, or as a feeling about the meeting with God, this volume is focused on the actual types of games, leisure activities, public performances for fun, and other practical aspects, and their spiritual meaning even in a mystical and theoretical context, for instance.

As Claire Taylor Jones remarks in her review of *Pleasure in the Middle Ages* edited by Cohen-Hanegbi, Naama and Piroška Nagy (2017),

The essays are grouped into three sections: "Pleased Bodies," "Didactic Pleasures," and "Pleasures in God." The first section treats pleasurable sensations or activities and the experience of bodily pleasure in different historical contexts and from different disciplinary perspectives. The second section explores the role of pleasure in pursuing virtue and in constructing a Christian cultural community. The essays of the final section treat pleasure as repudiated, allegorized, and transformed in the writings of Church reformers and mystics.

And:

However, the effect of the organization is to lead the reader on the path of mystical enlightenment, from base pleasures of the medical body, through bodily pleasure ordered to virtue, to rejection of the physical and enjoyment of the divine – achieved in Faesen's final essay which finds in the Flemish mystics "an enjoyment on the level of 'being' rather than the level of 'experiencing'" (371).¹⁶

There is no question concerning the validity of this approach, regarding pleasure as a sentiment or emotion as experienced in the pre-modern world in perhaps psychosomatic form, providing satisfaction, joy, delight, or sensation in general,

¹⁶ Claire Taylor Jones, review of *Pleasure in the Middle Ages*, ed. Naama Cohen-Hanegbi and Piroška Nagy. International Medieval Research (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), in *The Medieval Review* 18.12.04 (online).

but our intention is much more directed toward the material, practical, maybe just banal, trivial, or pedestrian aspect of everyday life. Yet, if we do not have a good grasp of that part of human existence, how would we then be able to claim to have a full understanding of medieval and also early modern culture?¹⁷

The question regarding how to find relevant documents from the pre-modern era will always loom large on the horizon, but recent research has opened many new avenues for this kind of new scholarship, pointing out not only the vast corpus of didactic texts, of sermons, and of entertaining literature, but also the incredibly important and until today hardly tapped collection of letters or written statements (supplications) by clerics and lay people addressed to the Holy See in Rome, the Apostolic Penitentiary, requesting absolution or dispensation from (perceived) sins or crimes which an individual had committed in the past and which, many years later, prevented them from being appointed to official positions in the Church or to realize some personal goals.

As Arnold Esch has now alerted us, here we come across many facets of people's ordinary lives, facets that normally never made their way into official documents. These supplications talk about many different kinds of misbehavior or even criminal activities, at least as they were interpreted by the authors of those documents or by their superiors who wanted to deny them their requests back home because of the previous sinful behavior. The range of themes or topics is amazing, and also includes cases involving visits to the tavern, conflicts between two individuals, sometimes with a deadly outcome, then cases of playing music and joining dances, sport activities, card games, playing dice, tournaments, taking baths, going hunting, board games, gambling, and so forth. There is, for instance, the earliest report about an accident in a soccer match from 1441, or an account of public festivities involving dancing and playing with a ball from 1440, or a confession about the death of a child during Shrovetide when it fell off a swing in 1439.¹⁸

17 See also C. M. Woolgar, *The Senses in Late Medieval England* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2006); *Pleasure and Danger in Perception: The Five Senses in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Corine Schleif. The Senses & Society, 5.1: Special Issue (Oxford: Berg, 2010); *Sensual and Sensory Experiences in the Middle Ages: On Pleasure, Fear, Desire and Pain*, ed. Carme Muntaner Alsina, David Carrillo-Rangel, Delfi I. Nieto-Isabel, and Pau Castell Granados (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017). See also Andrea Zech, *Spielarten des Gottes-Genusses: Semantiken des Genießens in der europäischen Frauenmystik des 13. Jahrhunderts*. Historische Semantik, 25 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015).

18 Arnold Esch, *Die Lebenswelt des europäischen Spätmittelalters: Kleine Schicksale selbst erzählt in Schreiben an den Papst* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2014), 71–102. See now also *Supplications from England and Wales in the Registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary, 1410–1503*, ed. Peter D. Clarke. 3 vols. The Canterbury and York Society, 103–105 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013–2015).

Philosophy of Free Play: Universal

Hardly any philosopher, linguist, child psychologist, sociologist, etc. has ever entirely ignored thinking about the nature of playing and leisure, the essential activity free of external social constraints. Already Heraclitus (ca. 500 B.C.E.) talked about time as a playing child moving figures on a board and holding royal power over all. Plato argued that the human being was a plaything of God and hence had to entrust itself to game in order to please God. Art, created by people, constitutes a form of game because it is different from nature and copies it. Aristotle did not comment extensively on game, except once quite famously in his *Politics* where he compares the individual that does not cooperate politically with the entire state or community with a single player, but opined that it was a form of necessary relaxation without which humans could not fully exist, an idea which was later adopted by Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) in the thirteenth century.¹⁹

Nicholas of Cusa (d. 1464), whom I will discuss later at greater length, was the first to offer a full theoretical discussion of gaming both in practical and theoretical terms, reading game as a metaphor of human existence and the relationship between the individual and God.²⁰ In the subsequent history of philosophy, the topic of game gained more profound attention only by the end of the eighteenth century, when Immanuel Kant, in his *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790), called

Cf. also Kirsi Salonen and Ludwig Schmugge, *A Sip from the "Well of Grace": Medieval Texts from the Apostolic Penitentiary*. Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Canon Law, 7 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009).

19 I have drawn those global perspectives on the philosophical discussion of 'play' from Angelika Corbineau-Hoffmann, "Spiel," *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer. Vol. 9 (Basel: Schwabe & Co, 1995), cols. 1383–90. But let us first consider a definition. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, for instance, offers these two definitions, apart from specializing meaning in different contexts: "Active bodily exercise or movement; brisk and vigorous action of the body or limbs, as in fighting, fencing, dancing, leaping, etc.," or: "The action of lightly and briskly wielding or plying a weapon in fencing or combat" (<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/145474?rskey=QoSOWc&result=1#eid>; last accessed on Sept. 1, 2018). Corbineau-Hoffmann offers a particularly useful outline and overview of the various positions taken by philosophers vis-à-vis game and playing until the recent past. For our present purpose, I can only highlight some of the central points. The following quotations are taken from her article since it would go far beyond the scope of this study to investigate the entire history of game philosophy all by itself. For games in antiquity, see Louis Becq de Fouquières, *Les jeux des anciens* (Paris: C. Reinwald, 1869); Harold James Ruthven Murray, *A History of Board Games Other Than Chess* (see note 7).

20 Andreas Hermann Fischer, *Spielen und Philosophieren zwischen Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*. V&R Academic (Göttingen and Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016).

game a “Beschäftigung, die für sich selbst angenehm ist” (an occupation that is pleasant by itself), without having any relationship to critical thinking and reasoning. And Friedrich Schiller suggested in his famous *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (1795) that through play people would gain a new form of inner freedom from their social, political, and economic limitations and mundane constraints. In other words, through the free play the individual would have the opportunity to acquire access to a new form of aesthetics coupled with freedom because human life is determined by a “Spiel-Trieb” (instinct of playing): “Der Mensch spielt nur, wo er in voller Bedeutung des Worts Mensch ist, und er ist nur da ganz Mensch, wo er spielt” (The human being plays only then when s/he is, in the full meaning of the word, human, and s/he is only then a full human being when s/he plays).²¹

Many Romantic philosophers such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and Friedrich Schlegel followed him in this regard when they reflected on the idea of beauty by itself, the aesthetic dimension of human life. Most significantly for the modern world, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) finally, drawing once again from Heraclitus and Schiller, argued that the entire world was a game, which would remove all moral and ethical categories in the evaluation of human actions. If God created the world in a playful manner, the living creatures would have no other choice but to continue with the game that was given them (*Panpaida*). In his famous *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister* (from 1878 to 1880), for instance, he poignantly emphasized that both fairy tales and games belong to the fundamentals of all human life.²²

21 Colas Duflo, *Le jeu: de Pascal à Schiller* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997); Ingeborg Strohmeier, *Musik und Spiel im Lichte der Kant-Schillerschen Ästhetik* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2016); see also the contributions to *Schiller, der Spieler*, ed. Peter-André Alt, Marcel Lepper, and Ulrich Rauff (Göttingen: Wallstein-Verlag, 2013). Cf. further Irmgard Kowatzki, *Der Begriff des Spiels als ästhetisches Phänomen: Von Schiller bis Benn*. Stanford German Studies, 4 (Bern and Frankfurt a. M.: Herbert Lang, 1973); Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner, “Von der Geschichtsphilosophie zur Ästhetik: Von der Ästhetik zur Geschichtsphilosophie,” *Friedrich Schiller: Der unterschätzte Theoretiker*, ed. Georg Bollenbeck and Lothar Ehrlich (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2007), 39–35.

22 Chapter 11: “Um der Langeweile zu entgehen, arbeitet der Mensch entweder über das Maß seiner sonstigen Bedürfnisse hinaus oder er erfindet das Spiel, das heißt die Arbeit, welche kein anderes Bedürfnis stillen soll, als das nach Arbeit überhaupt. Wer des Spieles überdrüssig geworden ist und durch neue Bedürfnisse keinen Grund zur Arbeit hat, den überfällt mitunter das Verlangen nach einem dritten Zustand, welcher sich zum Spiel verhält, wie Schweben zum Tanzen, wie Tanzen zum Gehen, nach einer seligen, ruhigen Bewegtheit: es ist die Vision der Künstler und Philosophen von dem Glück” (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in drei Bänden* [Munich: Hanser, 1954], vol. 1, 715–16. Also available online at: <https://www.textlog.de/22198.html>; last accessed on July 7, 2018). The most respected edition is now: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche*

Ever since, game has mattered critically for modern philosophers, whether we think of Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Jacques Derrida, John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Arnold Gehlen, and Émile Benveniste.²³

In the present context, I ignore the difference between leisure and recreation, which matters more in sociological terms and less for cultural history in the pre-modern world when the differences between private and public were not as significant as they are for us. Only with the sixteenth century do we witness the emergence of a concrete perception of leisure in terms of “*licentia*” or “*loisir*,” that is, free time away from the work day. In classical antiquity the notion of “*otium*” mattered significantly, but in the Middle Ages this mostly meant the time away from chivalric or labor activities and dedicated to attending mass, or to the participation in church festivals. However, those, in turn, were rigidly determined by countless regulations to combat the danger of *luxuria*. We would have to keep in mind that medieval society did not strictly differentiate between time of work and time of leisure, especially because the nobility was not necessarily required to do manual labor for its income. This was to change

Werke, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980–). In my translation: ‘In order to escape boredom, the human being works beyond the extent to which he is ordinarily required, or s/he invents a game, that is, a kind of work that does not satisfy any need, except the one for work itself. The person who gets tired of game and does not have the need for work because of additional desires, is overcome at times by the longing for a third condition, which is determined by the same relationship to game as flowing is related to dancing, as dancing to walking, and this after a blissful, tranquil movement: it is the artist’s and the philosopher’s vision of happiness.’ Surprisingly, in the major reference work for Nietzsche, *Nietzsche-Handbuch: Leben – Werk – Wirkung*, ed. Henning Ottmann (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2000), the topic of play or game is mentioned only in passing, 88, 147, 348. See, however, Catherine Bates, *Play in a Godless World: The Theory and Practice of Play in Shakespeare, Nietzsche and Freud* (London: Open Gate Press, 1999); Alexander Aichele, *Philosophie als Spiel: Platon – Kant – Nietzsche* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2000); Vasile Padurean, *Spiel – Kunst – Schein: Nietzsche als ursprünglicher Denker* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2008).

23 Ingeborg Heidemann, *Der Begriff des Spieles und das ästhetische Weltbild in der Philosophie der Gegenwart* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968); Heinrich Kutzner, *Erfahrung und Begriff des Spiels: eine religionswissenschaftliche, metapsychologische und gesellschaftskritische Untersuchung* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1975); Martina Roesner, *Metaphysica ludens: das Spiel als phänomenologische Grundfigur im Denken Martin Heideggers*. *Phaenomenologica*, 167 (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003); Klaus D. Frank, *Lebensspiele: Versuch einer philosophischen Sicht* (Hamburg: tredition, 2018); Steffen Wittig, *Die Ludifizierung des Sozialen: differenztheoretische Bruchstücke des Als-Ob* (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2018). See now also the contributions to *Spielwissen und Wissensspiele: Wissenschaft und Game-Branche im Dialog über die Kulturtechnik des Spiels*, ed. Thomas Lilge and Christian Stein. *Edition Kulturwissenschaft*, 139 (Bielefeld: transcript, 2018).

fundamentally during the long-term paradigm shift to the early modern world, but this is not of relevance for our present purposes.²⁴

Nevertheless, the phenomenon of playful activities has continued to exert considerable influence until today, a time which seems to be more determined by *bricolage* than by creativity, hence an existence constrained by a limited number of moves on the gameboard of life where rules are established and then also transgressed depending on the *magister ludi* and the degree of her/his authority.²⁵ Even linguistically, we can notice how much the approaches to game, specifically, varied from culture to culture, from language to language, and from period to period, and yet, fundamentally, shared the same principles of winning and losing, challenges, calculations about the proper move, and the likelihood of luck. Considering that games apparently distracted the individual from God and subjected him/her to random rules inappropriate to a good Christian, it was little wonder that medieval and also pre-modern clerical critics heavily condemned this entire phenomenon.²⁶

Medieval and early modern Europe witnessed, above all, the emergence of the religious play, which met with ever-growing interest and represented a public engagement in imaginary roles on a fictional game board. In fact, the large number of entertaining religious plays, filled with much sarcastic humor, deftly sexual allusions, hilarious confusions, is almost legion, if we consider, for instance, the fourteenth-century *Miracles de Notre-Dame par personnages*, composed and performed between 1339 and 1382 by the Saint-Eloi confraternity of goldsmiths in

24 Rolf Sprandel, "Spiele: A. Mittel-, West- und Südeuropa," *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. VII (Munich: Lexma Verlag, 1995), 2105–06; see also the contributions to *Jeux, sports et divertissements au moyen âge et à l'âge classique: actes du 116e Congrès national des sociétés savantes, Section d'histoire médiévale et de philologie, Chambéry, 1991* (Paris: Ed. du CTHS, 1993); Fabian Müllers and Sylvestre Jonquay, *Les jeux au Moyen Âge*, rev. and expanded ed. (Aubagne: La Muse, 2015); Alessandro Rizzi, *Ludus/ludere: Giocare nell'Italia alla fine del Medio Evo*. Ludica, 3 (Treviso: Fondazione Benetton, 1995).

25 Tanja Wetzel, "Spiel," *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe: Historisches Wörterbuch*, ed. Karlheinz Barck, Martin Fontius, et al. (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2003), vol. 5, 577–618; here 578–79. The term 'magister ludi' of course plays a central role in Hermann Hesse's famous novel *Das Glasperlenspiel* from 1943, where the protagonist Josef Knecht rises to the highest position in the intellectual and artistic community of Castalia but then, after he has performed his last master game, leaves that almost antiseptic world and returns to 'reality' in order to teach. Despite the tragic outcome, Knecht leaves a deep impact on his new student and can thus, so it appears, change him by instilling a new level of maturity in this young man. See also further below where I attempt to connect Hesse's *Glass Bead Game* with the *Enigmata* by the Anglo-Saxon monk Aldhelm.

26 See the contribution to this volume by Chiara Benati. She quotes both late medieval German didactic writers and also refers to their basic model, the biblical text of Christ's Passion.

Paris. As Linda Rouillard now explains in her review, in these “plays [] we meet greedy popes and bishops, lascivious nuns, and miscreant judges. Barren couples lose their children to the devil or to overlaying. Wives are falsely accused of adultery. Typically the miracle entails an eventual rejection of one’s sins and new-found faith in God’s mercy through Mary. Occasionally we find spectacular miracles of a cut-off hand that regrows, as in the play about St. Chrysostom, or of vision restored to gouged-out eyeballs, as in the character of Libanius in the play about the Emperor Justinian.”²⁷

In the long run, this basically facilitated the increased secularization of this genre (see the Shrovetide play, carnival, didactic plays, etc.) and the emergence of the early modern theater play, probably best represented by William Shakespeare and his contemporaries both in England and on the Continent (Aphra Behn, Andreas Gryphius, Molière, among others). At the risk of widening the whole notion of pleasure and leisure too much, we can certainly recognize here new forms of public entertainment not only for the noble class, but for the entire urban population, for instance. Some plays continued to be deeply religious (e.g., Easter or Passion plays, Nativity plays, etc.), others were specifically composed for the Shrovetide season and aimed at moral and ethical teachings through hilarious and facetious elements, scenes, and figures. Subsequently, however, those plays increasingly gained in depth and addressed universal, historical, philosophical, ethical, and moral issues of great relevance for the audience.²⁸

Large philosophical, political, and economic issues are certainly also embedded in concrete play objects or board games throughout time and all over

²⁷ *Miracles de Notre-Dame par personnages*, ed. and trans. Gérald Bezançon and Pierre Kunstmann. Vol. I: *Moyen Âge en Traduction* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2017); reviewed by Linda Rouillard in *The Medieval Review* 18.12.12 (online).

²⁸ Alan Hindley, “Playing Games in the Early French Theatre (1350 – 1550),” *The Playful Middle Ages: Meanings of Play and Plays of Meaning: Essays in Memory of Elaine C. Block*, ed. Paul Hardwick. *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe*, 23 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 23–43; Albrecht Classen, “The Discourse About the Gender-Relationships on the Urban Stage: in Late-Medieval German Shrovetide Plays and Verse Narratives,” *Performance and Theatricality in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Markus Cruse. *Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 41 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 111–33. Cf. also the other contributions to this volume. Cf. also *Ambivalenzen des geistlichen Spiels*, ed. Jörn Bockmann and Regina Toepfer, 2018 (see note 6).

the world,²⁹ and a tournament or a game of bowling, a swimming contest, or the entertainment with fighting horses (Iceland, above all) replicates, in turn, the simple games which children pursue, and vice versa.³⁰ Globally speaking, both in the past and present, games and playful activities represent concrete, physical life but in a more abstract, maybe artistic fashion, especially because the consequences, gains and losses do not have a direct impact on reality, and yet they are certainly part of it, historically, culturally, and materially. In games, the individual copies the world and plays with it as well, duplicating and varying the rules as they dominate reality.³¹

In games, art and life find a newly shared platform and facilitate the enactment of fantasy, or, as Wetzel now suggests, it is the “Entwurf und Deutung virtueller Konstellationen” (the design and interpretation of virtual constellations).³² Despite specific rules in all games, there is a certain freedom from the requirements in real life. We would, however, lose the firm grip on the various forms of pleasure if we uncritically accepted Martin Heidegger’s claims, as formulated in his *Satz vom Grund* (1957), that all games take place without any causality or justification and operate in a separate “Zeit-Spiel-Raum[]” (time-game-space) free from all external constraints.³³ Even in postmodern thinking, the notion of play matters critically insofar as it constitutes, in Jacques Derrida’s words, the focal point of centered structure: “The concept of centered structure is in fact the concept of a play based on a fundamental ground, a play which itself is beyond the reach of play.”³⁴ As he admits himself, this decentering operation, the replacement of hierarchical structure by way of play, was first observed by Frie-

29 See now the contributions to *Games of Empires* (see note 4). The contributors address mostly board games as played in antiquity, the Middle Ages, the early modern age, and in the modern world, highlighting the political, ethical, and social implications in games at large.

30 Lisa J. Kiser, “Animal Acts: Animals in Medieval Sports, Entertainments, and Menageries,” *A Cultural History of Animals*, ed. Linda Kalof and Brigitte Resl (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), vol. 2, 103–26; see also Paul Milliman, “Games and Pastimes” (see note 8), 610–11. As to horse fighting, *Hestaping*, which was, contrary to previous research, virtually never intended to lead to the death of one of the animals, and which instead served as a form of public entertainment to demonstrate the horse owner’s worth, see the contribution to this volume by Carlee Arnett.

31 This was one concept centrally developed by Friedrich Nietzsche, who talked about the “Weltspiel.” See Wetzel, “Spiel” (see note 25), 591–603.

32 Wetzel, “Spiel” (see note 25), 602.

33 Wetzel, “Spiel” (see note 25), 605.

34 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. with an intro. and additional notes by Alan Bass (orig. 1968; 1978; London: Routledge, 1995), 279.

drich Nietzsche, promoted by Sigmund Freud, and developed further by Martin Heidegger.

Even though subsequently the notion of play no longer matters specifically for Derrida because he turns to the interaction of the sign and the signified, even he recognizes and acknowledges the fundamental significance of play within the epistemological process.³⁵ For our purposes, we can be satisfied with the realization that we have thus strong confirmation of play being a universally relevant activity that both undermines and reconfirms structure, thus threatens and reconstitutes the larger system. Both medieval tournaments and modern-day soccer championships, chess games and gambling, various ball games and religious plays fall into the category of the playful, that is, entertainment, but they all also mirror and influence real conditions and can have huge political, economic, even military implications. All pleasure activities belong to the world of non-work, and yet they mirror and reconfirm reality through various narrative and performative actions.

To put it differently, all leisure activities are, of course, certainly removed from the physical, political, or religious realm, but not entirely disconnected from it. We are still dealing with a very specific cultural-historical phenomenon located intriguingly between seriousness and playfulness, as Gregory Bateson argued in his article “A Theory of Play and Fantasy” (1955). According to his research, children’s games and adults’ behavior demonstrate striking similarities, even if on different levels: “adult phenomena as gambling and playing with risk have their roots in the combination of threat and play.”³⁶ We could also imagine

35 Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (see note 34), 287: “One could say ... that this movement of play, permitted by the lack or absence of a center or origin, is the movement of *supplementarity*. One cannot determine the center and exhaust totalization because the sign which replaces the center, which supplements it, taking the center’s place in its absence – this sign is added, occurs as a surplus, as a *supplement*.”

36 Gregory Bateson, “A Theory of Play and Fantasy: A Report on Theoretical Aspects of the Project of Study of the Role of the Paradoxes of Abstraction in Communication,” *Psychiatric Research Reports. American Psychiatric Association* 2 (December 1955): 39–51; also in id., *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology*. Chandler Publications for Health Sciences (San Francisco, CA: Chandler Publications, 1972), 176–93; here 181. He further emphasizes the significant correlation between play and ritual, ceremony, and public performance. The worst aspect proves to be the human willingness to die in war: “Finally, in the dim region where art, magic, and religion meet and overlap, human beings have evolved the ‘metaphor that is meant,’ the flag which men will die to save, and the sacrament that is felt to be more than ‘an outward and visible sign, given unto us.’ Here we can recognize an attempt to deny the difference between map and territory, and to get back to the absolute innocence of communication by means of pure mood signs” (183). See also Wetzel, “Spiel” (see note 25), 607; cf. now also Stephen Nachmanovitch, “This Is Play,” *New Literary History* 40.1 (Winter, 2009):

game as a mode of transgressing established order, as an experiment with and in reality, as an event within time, as deconstruction, as fantasy and imagination, and hence as a “Metapher des Lebens,” as Dietmar Kamper formulated it (metaphor of life).³⁷

Games, however, are only a specific cultural manifestation, and incorporate all types of pleasure and leisure for many different age groups and might even be gender specific. The chess board, for instance, intentionally represents life, that is, the social structure, but in an experimental measure, and while many medieval protagonists are dedicated to playing chess, many others are simply onlookers or devote themselves to other games. In other words, we are dealing with a short-term vacation from real life, to which all those involved will have to return, or which they have to find at the end, as is beautifully illustrated in the Middle English alliterative romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* where the game played by the Green Knight is predicated on fear of death (see below).

Play and leisure are distinct from real life, and yet they repeat and refract it as well. Methodologically, we can hence easily draw conclusions about historical reality by studying fictional accounts about playful enactments of courtly ideals, for instance, and, in the reverse, we can focus on the hard facts of life and then expound on them with respect to their playful replication in the private dimension.

Caesarius of Heisterbach: The Vice of Gambling from a Monastic Perspective

Notably, King Alfonso X of Castile the Wise was the first to engage extensively and theoretically with the phenomenon of game when he composed his famous *Los libros de juegos diversos de axedrez, dados y tablas* (1283).³⁸ For him, God had

1–24. As to the danger, at least according to late medieval didactic writers, involved in board games, dice, and all kinds of games involving money for the winner see the contribution to this volume by Chiara Benati.

37 Dietmar Kamper, “Spiel als Metapher des Lebens,” *Der Mensch und das Spiel in der verplanten Welt*, ed. Andreas Flitner (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1976), 130–45; here quoted from Wetzell, “Spiel” (see note 4), 617.

38 Laura Fernández Fernández, *Arte y ciencia en el scriptorium de Alfonso X el Sabio*. Monografías de Alfonso X, 1. Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, Serie historia y geografía, 259 (El Puerto de Santa María: Cátedra Alfonso X el Sabio, 2013); Joseph F. O’Callaghan, *The Learned King: The Reign of Alfonso X of Castile*. The Middle Ages Series (1993; Philadelphia, PA: University

made possible the pursuit of entertainment to alleviate the burdens of human life, so he felt justified to explore the many different kinds of games available and known to him. Gaming constituted an intellectual challenge, a worthwhile enterprise that could be appreciated even by the most intellectual and wisest individuals. Many games such as chess are predicated on intellectual skill and dexterity and mirror the hierarchy of society, as Alfonso and then also the Dominican Jacobus de Cessolis indicated in his highly popular and often translated *Liber de moribus hominum ac officiis nobilium super ludo scaccorum* from ca. 1275.³⁹ Very soon, however, many different types of gambling games emerged in the high Middle Ages, which soon triggered massive protests and criticism by clerics all over medieval Europe,⁴⁰ unless they themselves were, particularly as vicars, prone to playing games, spending time in the taverns, and enjoying their concubines or prostitutes. This topic was perhaps best expressed by the fifteenth-century French poet François Villon in his *Le Testament* (1462–1463?).⁴¹ But either way, game was continuously regarded as a mirror of the entire spectrum of life, either prescriptively or descriptively. Gaming could be a model to practice

of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). The research on this outstanding king is legion; see, for instance, Julio Valdeón Baroque, *Alfonso X el Sabio: La forja de la España moderna*. temas ‘de hoy. historia (Madrid: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, 2003); H. Salvador Martínez, *Alfonso X, the Learned: A Biography*, English trans. by Odile Cisneros. Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, 146 (2003; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010). I will later return to these *Libros de juegos diversos de axedrez* in another context.

39 Franziska Küenzlen, “Lehrdichtung zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit: Die Bearbeitung von Jacobus’ de Cessolis Schachtraktat durch Konrad von Ammenhausen,” *Dichtung und Didaxe: Lehrhaftes Sprechen in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. Henrike Lähnemann and Sandra Linden (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 265–83; Jean Rychner, “Les traductions françaises de la moralisatio super ludum scaccorum de Jacques de Cessoles,” *Recueil de travaux offert à Clovis Brunel par ses amis, collègues et élèves*. Mémoires et documents publiés par la Société de l’Ecole des Chartes, 12 (Paris: Société de l’Ecole des chartes, 1955), 480–93; Oliver Plessow, *Mittelalterliche Schachzettelbücher zwischen Spielsymbolik und Wertevermittlung: der Schachtraktat des Jacobus de Cessolis im Kontext seiner spätmittelalterlichen Rezeption* (Münster: Rhema, 2007).

40 W. Endrei, “Spiele: Mittel-, West- und Südeuropa. Spiele im privaten Bereich,” *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. VII (Munich: Lexma Verlag, 1995), 2108–10; Ursula Kampmann, *Das Spiel mit dem Glück: Glücksspiele und -spieler aus historischer, philosophischer und psychologischer Sicht* (Zürich: MoneyMuseum, 2012).

41 Barry Dobson, “The English Vicars Choral: An Introduction,” *Vicars Choral at English Cathedrals: Cantate Domino: History, Architecture and Archeology*, ed. Richard A. Hall and David Stocker (Oxford: Oxbow, 2005), 1–10; here 8; see the contribution to this volume by Chiara Benati. As to taverns, drinking, and gambling, hence also to Villon, see the contribution to this volume by Albrecht Classen.

good life, or it could represent the deviations and shortcomings in human existence.⁴²

The famous, more or less contemporary Cistercian novice master in Germany, Caesarius of Heisterbach, in his *Dialogus miraculorum* (ca. 1260; first printed in 1483), included numerous examples of people who fell prey to sin because of their excessive passion for playing games and gambling, and who thus wasted their life in a condemnable, sinful fashion.⁴³

The addiction to gambling or playing with dice by members of the clergy was particularly condemned in various sermons and other relevant texts throughout the entire Middle Ages and the early modern age, obviously because this proved to be a rather widespread problem, as we hear countless times from various preachers and authors of critical comments about the dangers of gambling or gaming at large, as illustrated from very early on with the reference to the theme of the soldiers throwing dice or cast lots for Christ's clothing (Matt 27:35), such as Hugo von Trimberg (see below), and then also in the early modern age, by authors such as Jakob Mennel (d. 1532), Ruy Lopez (fl. middle of the sixteenth century), Duke August II of Brunswick and Lüneburg (pseudonym: Gustavus Selenus, d. 1655), not to forget the many artists who created corresponding paintings or woodcuts treating the same theme, such as William Hogarth's "A Rake's Progress" from 1735.⁴⁴

42 Barbara Holländer, "Spielbewertung in der Zeit des Spielwandels," *"Mit Glück und Verstand": Zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte der Brett- und Kartenspiele*, ed. Christiane Zangs and Hans Holländer (Aachen: Thoutet, 1994), 109–10; see also the subsequent entries on specific games and authors critical of games, 110–27.

43 "Mit Glück und Verstand" (see note 42); Caesarius von Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, trans. and commentary by Nikolaus Nösges and Horst Schneider. Vol. 2. *Fontes Christiani*, 86.2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 780–81. See also the English trans., Caesarius of Heisterbach, *The Dialogue on Miracles*, trans. H. von E. Scott and C. C. Swinton Bland. 2 vols. (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1929). Chiara Benati, in her contribution to this volume, offers numerous references to the critical evaluation of playing with dice.

44 For further details, see Chiara Benati's contribution to this volume; cf. also Walter Tauber, *Das Würfelspiel im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit: eine kultur- und sprachgeschichtliche Darstellung*. Europäische Hochschulschriften. Reihe 1: Deutsche Sprache und Literatur, 959 (Frankfurt a. M., Bern, et al.: Peter Lang, 1987); R. Lieberwirth, "Glücksspiel," *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, ed. Adalbert Erler and Ekkehard Kaufmann, vol. 1 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1971), 1713–14; id., "Würfeln," *ibid.* (1998), 1545–46; "Mit Glück und Verstand" (see note 42), 112–37. For a reproduction of the entire series of paintings by Hogarth, see https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:A_Rake%27s_Progress?uselang=de; and for a detailed description of Hogarth's painting, http://www.artoftheprint.com/artistpages/hogarth_william_arakesprogresscompletesetofeight6.htm (both last accessed on July 12, 2018).

But let us return to the thirteenth century. Of course, as to be expected Caesarius does not detail the specifics of gambling and other games, such as in the tale about a young man who hanged himself after he had lost all of his clothing in gambling and felt deeply ashamed about this dishonor (4:44). The story about the novice Theobald proves to be particularly interesting for us because he is first introduced as a public entertainer and obsessive gambler: “vino et tesseri-bus deditus totus, et propter suam scurrilitatem in tota civitate Coloniensi notis-simus” (4:4, 682–84; completely given over to drinking wine and gambling, he was known in the entire city of Cologne for his scurrility). For Caesarius, it was a fortunate development that this man finally changed his way of thinking, but this was apparently a rare case, whereas in public most people seem to have been excessively dedicated to pursuing a life of pleasures in utter disregard of clerical teachings. Only the monastery offered an alternative, but even the monks were not free from temptations presented by gaming, drinking, and other leisure activities.

Among other stories, Caesarius tells the anecdote of one Cologne canon who applies for membership in the Cistercian monastery of Heisterbach, but the abbot rejects him because he easily recognizes that the man is a gambler. He wears only his tunic because he has lost his other clothing in gambling (1:11, 242). At the same time, he seems to be well known among the novices who, filled with excitement and joy (“maxime, non parvum fecit gaudium,” 242), strongly urge the abbot to accept him, but to no avail. Membership in a monastery thus seems to have been, at least in theory, the last refuge from a world entirely given over to pleasures and leisure. In another tale we hear that a young man joins the monastery because he has lost a large amount of money in gambling or some other game (“ludo,” 1:12, 242). His friends then urge him to change his mind and to return to their joyous company, which he finally does, which leads to a law case submitted by the abbot against him because he had already given his canonical oath. Although the history of medieval monasticism paints a clear picture of the enormous appeal which cloistered life exerted for those who wanted to ensure a safe pathway for their soul to the afterlife, at the same time, as Caesarius seems to indicate, the majority of people did not turn away from their secular existence and continued to pursue their personal pleasures in obvious disregard of the constant ‘barrage’ of sermons and other didactic comments by members of the clergy.

At another time, Caesarius informs us about large folk festivals with dances and music, which irritate the local priest immensely. One most impertinent old woman particularly guilty of transgressive behavior is then punished by God

and dies within three days (4:11).⁴⁵ In a yet another case we hear of a very skillful and highly passionate gambler who knows how to win with the dice all the time and so gains the money from all those who dare to challenge him. According to Caesarius, then God granted the devil the right to defeat that gambler in order to demonstrate the evil nature of this pleasurable activity which leads to addiction (“ut non die, non nocte quiesceret,” 1072). To the poor man’s surprise, the stranger magically wins all the games and finally the gambler recognizes the true identity of his opponent, but it is too late. The devil grabs him violently and pulls him through the roof, which rips all of his intestines out of him with full force (5:34). Nothing of his body is ever seen again, only the remains of the intestines hang from the roof tiles (1075). In short, for Caesarius gambling and playing games was a very present and dangerous phenomenon, and he regarded it as his task to warn his listeners about the dangers involved in those leisure activities. He knew very well that he would not have any impact on the situation outside of the monastery, but he tried at least, as the novice master that he was, to influence the young candidates within his own institution to understand the dangers to one’s spirituality and religious devotion resulting from the vices of gaming or gambling.

The Public Debate About the Value of Leisure Activities

Medieval Perspectives

Impressively, and this even for us today, in remarkable contrast to Caesarius and other contemporaries, Thomas Aquinas already drew a major distinction between those who commit the sin of falling prey to excessive play and those who are looking for simple entertainment and relaxation without undermining the seriousness of real life and without damaging the enjoyment of God’s love.⁴⁶ In other words, Aquinas simply believed that ordinary pleasures were fully acceptable as long as they did not divert the individual from the divine service.

⁴⁵ Caesarius von Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* (see note 43), Vol. 2, 700–01.

⁴⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II–II 168, 2–4; here quoted from Wolfgang Janke, “Spiel: Philosophisch,” *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, ed. Gerhard Müller. Vol. XXXI (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 671–76; here 673.

Human life does not consist only of work and fight, praying and serving, as I have emphasized already several times; instead, every individual throughout history has had central needs of enjoying free time, relaxing, and playing games. There is always time for work and time for entertainment, and while struggle, labor, public performance, etc. are subject to a certain form of force, play and entertainment represent the freedom from external rules, here disregarding the internal rules of every game or playful entertainment, including leisure activities, such as ambulating, visiting a spa, dancing, and the like.⁴⁷ In the present volume, and hence also here in this introductory essay, we consequently take a closer look at this world of entertainment, which certainly also constituted a fundamental aspect of life in the Middle Ages and the early modern age. We will examine a wide variety of critical issues underscoring the larger phenomenon, and will thus attempt to create a kaleidoscope of perspectives centrally relevant for the pre-modern world, parallel to issues such as death, friendship, hygiene, multilingualism, childhood, old age, gender issues, and so forth.⁴⁸

While entertainment has always represented a challenge for moralists, religious critics, and politicians of a certain bent intent on regulating all aspects of life for ordinary people, gaming, pleasures, and leisure activities have been subject to intensive theological, philosophical, anthropological, and sociological investigations both in the past and in the present.⁴⁹ In the late Middle Ages, we encounter not only didactic comments on gaming, normally uttered by preachers and other theologians, but also abstract reflections on the notion of game as a metaphor of human existence.⁵⁰

Previous research tended to identify leisure as a phenomenon that came into being only in the nineteenth century, primarily in the west, but we ought to consider that the upper classes across the globe have always enjoyed extra time and extra resources for pleasure activities that were of great importance especially since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵¹ Both knights and pilgrims,

⁴⁷ Helmut Fischer, "Spiele," *Encyclopädie des Märchens*, ed. Rolf Wilhelm Brednich. Vol. 12 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 1032–37; here 1032.

⁴⁸ Many of those issues have already been addressed in volumes that have previously appeared in our book series, "Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture."

⁴⁹ Thomas Klie, "Spiel," Sections I–IV, *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft*. Fourth, completely rev. ed., ed. Hans Dieter Betz, Don S. Browning, et al. Vol. 7 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), cols. 1571–76.

⁵⁰ Ann E. Moyer, *The Philosophers' Game: Rithmomachia in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*. Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Civilization (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

⁵¹ Laurent Turcot, *Sports et Loisirs: Une histoire des origines à nos jours*. Collection Folio / Histoire, 257 (Paris: Gallimard, 2016); see also Gary Gross, *A Social History of Leisure – Since 1600*

and members of various aristocratic or otherwise wealthy individuals demonstrated a great interest in traveling for travel's sake, whether they went to holy sites or explored exotic countries, or whether they looked for highly esteemed universities.⁵² The lower classes could probably never profit from the same freedom, but they also looked for entertainment, however, and this wherever it was possible. In order to gain a solid grasp of the topic itself, this introductory study will not only summarize the findings by the individual contributors (at the end), but intends also to outline and discuss the basic features that concern us here collectively.

Pleasure, Leisure, and Game in Practical Terms

What did games, playing, enjoyment, etc. mean for medieval and early modern people? Where do those terms appear in historical documents, what do they imply in the literary, philosophical, religious, and historiographical context? How did individuals and entire social groups, such as the members of the aristocratic courts embrace the notion of entertainment? Were games and secular recreation acceptable for the Church, or how did didactic writers view playing, games, toys, card games, chess games, tournaments, ball games, etc.? As soon as we open our perspective toward that dimension, we easily recognize that game/play certainly made up a considerable part of everyday life at all age levels, at least within secular society. At the same time, we also would have to admit that we have not gained enough insights to understanding game and other lei-

(State College, PA: Venture Publ., 1990); Peter Borsay, *A History of Leisure: The British Experience Since 1500* (New York: Palgrave, 2006). Despite significant differences, we should not ignore, for instance, that the medieval pilgrimage and the early modern *Grande tour* facilitated large-scale travels for a select group of wealthy individuals. See Lynne Withey, *Grand Tours and Cook's Tours: A History of Leisure Travel, 1750 to 1915* (New York: Morrow, 1997). Both pilgrimage and the *Grand tour* have attracted extensive interest by scholarship that I cannot engage with here. As to entertainment during pilgrimages, see further below. See also the contribution to this volume by Thomas Willard concerning the new leisure class in early modern English society during the Civil Wars.

52 Werner Paravicini, *Ehrenvolle Abwesenheit: Studien zum adligen Reisen im späteren Mittelalter*, ed. Jan Hirschbiegel and Harm von Seggern (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2017). He summarizes the overarching goal of his studies: "Worum geht es aber dann? Um die adlige Reisepraxis als kontinuierliche Anpassung einer herrschenden Schicht an die sich stetig wandelnden Anforderungen von Ehrgeiz und standesgemäßer Ausbildung im Laufe von etwa 500 Jahren, in einer Zeit zunehmender Konzentration von Staatlichkeit und von Monopolisierung der Chancen in der Hand der Fürsten und steigender Konkurrenz der Fachleute" (11).

sure activities in the pre-modern world despite numerous efforts by international scholars.⁵³

To approach the issue from a different perspective, let us keep the following questions in mind: Did the early medieval world, for instance, so deeply determined by military conflicts from early on – age of migration, attacks by the Huns, the Arabs, the Vikings, the Avars, the Magyars, the Mongols etc. – know anything about leisure time, personal enjoyment, play, or public entertainment? What did the warriors, knights, or simple soldiers do after a battle or during periods of idleness? Did monks and nuns dedicate themselves entirely to their religious service, without ever looking for alternatives to release the stress or boredom of their daily routine? The example of the *Carmina Burana*, mentioned already above, clearly signals that at least among the highest intellectual elites entertainment and enjoyment of life were of paramount importance, which certainly spilled over to convents and monasteries where often aristocrats sent their children for education. Members of the lower classes often imitated the practices and cultures of the upper classes, and so probably developed variant forms of aristocratic games.

As Marilyn L. Sandidge informs us, for instance, the origin of the game of tennis can be traced to late medieval monasteries where the cloisters were at times irreverently transformed into courts for this sport activity. The oldest visual evidence of tennis in the Middle Ages, here disregarding classical-ancient examples, appears in a book of hours from Cambrai, ca. 1300, which would point to northern France as the place of origin of this sport.⁵⁴

⁵³ The most comprehensive overview is now offered by Paul Milliman, “Games and Pastimes” (see note 8). For a surprisingly negative example, see Ernst Schubert, *Alltag im Mittelalter: Natürliches Lebensumfeld und menschliches Miteinander* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002). Although he covers many important aspects in medieval life, including ecocritical aspects (as I would call them), interhuman relations, and love, there is not one word on pleasure and leisure.

⁵⁴ See Marilyn L. Sandidge’s contribution to this volume; cf. also Heiner Gillmeister, *Aufschlag für Walther von der Vogelweide: Tennis seit dem Mittelalter* (Munich: Knaur, 1986); id., *Tennis: A Cultural History* 2nd ed. (1990; trans., 1997; Sheffield, South Yorkshire, and Bristol, CT: Equinox, 2017), 13. He points to King Louis X of France, also known as Hutin, the Quarrelsome, who on June 5, 1316 fell seriously ill after having made the unwise decision to drink a large amount of chilled wine kept in a grotto to get refreshment after a tennis match, 16–17. He soon succumbed to death, the first victim of extreme tennis, we might say. Gillmeister provides enough evidence to demonstrate that tennis was, indeed, a sport certainly commonly played at court, which motivated didactic writers such as Christine de Pizan to comment on it as well. See further Terry Todd *The Tennis Players from Pagan Rites to Strawberries and Cream* (Guernsey: Vallency Press, 1979); Robert William Henderson, *Ball, Bat and Bishop: The Origin of Ball Games* (New York:

In parallel to this, the game of golf can also be traced to the Middle Ages, when a record reports of a predecessor of this sport in Loenen aan de Vecht, near Hilversum, The Netherlands, in 1297. “In the 1261 Middle Dutch manuscript of the Flemish poet Jacob van Maerlant’s *Boeck Merlijn* mention is made of a ball game ‘mit ener coluen’ (with a colf/kolf [club]).”⁵⁵ In 1360, the city council of Brussels issued a ban on this leisure activity: “‘wie met colven tsolt es om twintich scell’ oft op hare overste cleet’ (he who plays at colf pays a fine of 20 shillings or his overcoat will be confiscated).” In 1387, Albrecht of Bavaria, regent of the county of Holland, Zeeland and Hainau, issued a ban on playing any game for money, with the exception of what we would call ‘golf’ today. And in 1388, he assigned a special field outside of the city of Haarlem where that sport could be practiced with full approval by the authorities.⁵⁶ Most impressively, one remarkable *Book of Hours*, the *Golf Book* from 1540 – British Library, Add MS 24098, Use of Rome – also known as the *Il libro del Golf*, splendidly illuminated by Simon Bening, depicts, even though only at the bottom of a page, a group of kids playing an early form of golf.⁵⁷

Rockport Press, 1947); Malcolm D. Whitman, *Tennis: Origins and Mysteries* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004).

55 Even if *Wikipedia* articles cannot always be trusted, the information on the history golf contained in the relevant article is significant; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_golf (last accessed on Oct. 24, 2018). The quote is from this site. For further research, see below.

56 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_golf (last accessed on Oct. 24, 2018); see also Robert Browning, *A History of Golf: The Royal and Ancient Game* (London: Dent, 1955); Will Grimsley, *Golf: Its History, People & Events* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966); Steven J. van Hengel, *Early Golf*. 2nd rev. ed. (1982; Vaduz: Eck, 1985); Elizabeth Jane MacNulty and Dale Concannon, *Golf – The Early Days: Royal & Ancient Game from its Origins to 1939* (Vancouver: Cavendish, 1995); David Stirk, *Golf: History & Tradition 1500 – 1945* (Ludlow: Excellent Press, 1998).

57 For a facsimile edition, see *Golf Book* ([Barcelona: M. Moliero Editor, 2004]); see also the extensive studies by Carlos Miranda García-Tejedor, *Golf Book* (Barcelona: M. Moliero Editor, 2004). The image at the bottom of a calendar page for September is very small in the octavo of the original/facsimile, but we can clearly recognize the golf clubs handled by the youth in front of a farm house. A larger image is in García-Tejedor’s study on p. 133. He points out that similar scenes can be found in the *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary* (fol. 6v) and the *Spinola Hours* (fol. 6v), both by Gerard Horenbout, and in the *Croy Hours*, which Bening probably worked on as well. García-Tejedor provides more background on the history of golf, already in Roman antiquity and then in the late Middle Ages, 131–34. For digital images, see <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-golf-book>; http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_24098; for illustrations, see online at: <http://www.bl.uk/turning-the-pages/?id=6a8fcef9-4373-46f4-8de9-7b6603024f43&type=book> (last accessed on Oct. 24, 2018). For Bening, see, for instance, *In Konkurrenz zum gedruckten Buch: die Meister von Gent und Brügge*, ed. Norbert Wolf. Die Galerie der schönsten Bücher: Buchmalerei erleben (Lucerne: Faksimile Verlag, 2006). For

Parents at most social class levels were certainly aware of their children's need to have some happy time, using toys and playing games, but chroniclers, biographers, poets, and artists have not reflected on those aspects of life at length, and this for understandable reasons, considering their primary concerns to deal with the more pressing issues of war, hunger, illness, death, and the hope of rest and relief in the afterlife, itself a form of pleasurable leisure in need of exploration. Nevertheless, we would be short-sighted if we focused on the catastrophic news contained in chronicles, for instance, only, and thereby assumed that early medieval people had exclusively war, God, and death in mind. The existence of a huge body of secular literature by itself signals how much pre-modern society was of course much in need of entertainment and sought out many avenues to gain pleasure and leisure time.

Even within the context of worst possible descriptions of the workings of demons and devils, terribly mistreating a human soul, we can glean evidence for the existence and common practice of playing physical games. Caesarius of Heisterbach, for instance, relating a story about the life of a deceased abbot of Morimond, mentions how his soul was taken to a horrible valley filled with sulfuric fumes. There demons tossed the soul back and forth, “ad similitudinem ludi pilae proiciebant; alii ex parte altera per aera volantem manibus suscipiebant” (1:32, 292; Those demons on one side threw the poor soul to the other side as in a ball game, and the demons on the other side caught it with their hands). Undoubtedly, this brief reference sheds significant light on certainly common practices of young and old people playing diverse ball games; otherwise this comment would not have made sense.

We can also refer to one of the most popular romances/novels from the entire Middle Ages, *Apollonius of Tyre*, originally composed in Greek in the second or third century C.E., which was translated into many different European languages and adapted countless times well into the seventeenth century. Fairly early on in the narrative, Apollonius arrives at the shore of Pentapolis, having barely survived a shipwreck. But he is taken in by King Archistrates, to whom he quickly appeals as an outstanding and fine young man who is exceedingly educated and well mannered. In the gymnasium, where the two men meet, they at first play a game of ball, in which Apollonius excels right away, which makes the king notice him:

When he was playing a game with his men, by God's favour Apollonius got close to the king's crow. He caught the ball as the king was playing and returned it with accuracy

many wonderful online reproductions, see <http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/artists/351/simon-bening-flemish-about-1483-1561/> (last accessed on Oct. 24, 2018).

and speed; when it came back he hit it back again even faster, and never let it fall. Then since King Archistrates had noticed the young man's speed and did not know who he was, and since he had no equal at the ballgame, he looked at his servants and said: "Draw back, servants. For I believe that this young man is a match for me."⁵⁸

Late medieval versions of this text also include this scene and thus support our claim that gaming was of central importance for the elite cultures, if not for all social classes throughout time. In Heinrich Steinhöwel's fifteenth-century German version, *Apollonius*, the protagonist observes the game being played in the gymnasium, and thinks by himself: "Des spiles kennest du dich maijster sin" (You know that you are a master in this game). Subsequently, he joins the game and indeed proves to be superior in his skill: "Er lieff dem bal engegen vnd schluog in so subtillich, das der küng ain besunder uff sechen uff in het" (He ran toward the ball and hit it back so adroitly that the king took particular note of him).⁵⁹ Social rank and esteem can thus also be achieved through the mastery of games, sport activities, card games, dance, etc.

Pilgrimage and Entertainment

When we consider how people passed their time while traveling, we find valuable information as well, such as in the Dominican Felix Fabri's famous *Evagatorium* from 1483.⁶⁰ In his discussion about the voyage from Venice to Jerusalem, having already detailed the long route from his home town Ulm in southern Germany across the Alps to northern Italy, he outlines in great detail how people keep themselves busy during the long sea voyage. Some immediately turn to drinking wine right after breakfast (122) and never let this go all day long, which is typical of the Saxons and the Flemish, and other lower-ranked people.

58 Elizabeth Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre: Medieval and Renaissance Themes and Variations: Including the text of the Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri with an English translation* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 1991), 125.

59 Tina Terrahe, *Heinrich Steinhöwels 'Apollonius': Edition und Studien*. Frühe Neuzeit, 179 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 181–83.

60 Here quoted from the very useful bilingual edition, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Reisens im Spätmittelalter*, selected and trans. by Folker Reichert together with Margit Stolberg-Vowinckel. *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters Freiherr-vom-Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe*, 46 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009), 122–35. See now Félix Fabri, *Les Errances de frère Félix, pèlerin en Terre sainte, en Arabie et en Égypte*, intro. gén. et éd. critique par Jean Meyers. Trad. et notes par Jean Meyers et Michel Tarayte. 6 vols. (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013–2017), vol. 1, 424–28.

Others gamble for money using dice, playing stones, or cards; others turn to playing chess (122). Some people dedicate themselves to playing music and singing songs, while others converse with each other, read books, and pray the paternoster. But the variety of people also brings it about that each individual pursues his/her own interest; some simply meditate by themselves, some keep busy with handiwork, and again others simply sleep all day. Fabri also notes that some keep walking all over the ship, lift heavy objects to keep up their strength, and others simply “faciendo animosa” (122; doing nonsense).

More reasonable seems to him to watch the sea, the land that passes by, and to write about their observations, what he himself is doing (122–24). Almost hilariously, one of the most important activities, which has not that much to do with pleasure or leisure, proves to be the necessity to chase and kill fleas, lice, and other creatures, which requires hours of work; otherwise one would not be able to sleep well at night. Certainly an important but heretofore ignored aspect of leisure and pleasure in the pre-modern period!

Finally, Fabri also notes that the condition of the sea and the weather have a significant influence on people's attitudes. If the circumstances are pleasant, everyone appears to be happy and in a good mood, but if they change to the negative, people either withdraw to themselves, become depressed and sorrowful, or they turn against each other and break out in terrible cursing and yelling. As the author then concludes: “Notavi manifeste, quod motus omnium passionum vehementior est in aqua quam extra” (124; I have clearly noticed that everyone's emotional conditions are stronger while they are on the water than on land). We could, however, also argue that the situation on a ship during a very long voyage to Jerusalem represented a unique situation which would not necessarily reflect the ordinary conditions back home. However, Fabri simply outlines what types of entertainment people were pursuing at that time and what options were available, all depending on the various individuals and their personal interests which they brought with them from the time before the pilgrimage.⁶¹

⁶¹ Fabri has been discussed recently in a variety of contexts; see, for instance, Albrecht Classen, “Imaginary Experience of the Divine: Felix Fabri's *Sionpilger* – Late-Medieval Pilgrimage Literature as a Window into Religious Mentality,” *Studies in Spirituality* 15 (2005): 109–28; id., “The Encounter with the Foreign in Medieval and Early Modern German Literature: Fictionality as a Springboard for Non-Xenophobic Approaches in the Middle Ages: *Herzog Ernst*, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Konrad von Würzburg, *Die Heidin*, and *Fortunatus*,” *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 14 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 457–87; see also my introduction (1–222), where I focus heavily on Fabri. As to his very concrete descriptions of life on ships, see Albrecht Classen, “Travel by Ship in the Late Middle Ages – Felix Fabri's Pilgrimage Account as a Meticulous Eye-Witness Report,”

We also have to consider that a pilgrimage across the sea to the Holy Land, for instance, represented a rather unique, difficult and dangerous situation since the travelers were bound to the small space of the ship with very little to keep them seriously occupied. Other pilgrims and general travelers who reached their goals via the land route had many other opportunities to enjoy their free time and so frequented, whenever possible, healing spas and other locations. Poggio Bracciolini, for instance, reports in a letter to Niccolò Niccoli (1416) about his visit to the Swiss town of Baden.⁶² As he notices, in the spa everyone is only intent on leaving all melancholy behind and aim at living a pleasant life by enjoying all material goods and other aspects of life as much as possible without worrying about the tomorrow: “Non de communi dividendo agitur, sed de communicandi divisa” (206; They are not occupied with sharing the communal goods, but with enjoying that what they all have already shared).

Other pilgrimage authors such as Arnold von Harff (1471–1505) also spent a long time in the Swiss spas and did not have a great hurry to reach their goal or to return home. They knew very well how to combine the religious zeal with the pleasures of this life, combining the spa experience with the pleasantries of parties and other events in the respective towns.⁶³ While all pilgrimages have been religiously determined, many pilgrims also must have enjoyed their free time in a variety of ways, as these few references clearly indicate, especially since the late

International Journal of History and Cultural Studies 4.4 (2018): 42–50; <https://www.arcjournals.org/pdfs/ijhcs/v4-i4/3.pdf> (last accessed on Nov. 27, 2018). Cf. also Kathryn Beebe, *Pilgrim and Preacher: The Audiences and Observant Spirituality of Friar Felix Fabri (1437/8–1502)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁶² *Quellen zur Geschichte des Reisens im Spätmittelalter*, selected and trans. by Folker Reichert (see note 60), 198–209.

⁶³ *Rom – Jerusalem – Santiago (Gebundene Ausgabe)*, *Das Pilgertagebuch des Ritters Arnold von Harff (1496–1498)*, ed. [trans.] Helmut Brall-Tuchel and Folker Reichert (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2007); Albrecht Classen, “Travel Space as Constructed Space: Arnold von Harff Observes the Arabic Space,” *German Studies Review* 33.2 (2010): 375–88; id., “Traveler, Linguist, Pilgrim, Observer, and Scientist: Arnold von Harff Explores the Near East and Finds Himself Among Fascinating Foreigners,” *Ain gut geboren edel man: A Festschrift for Winder McConnell on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Gary C. Shockey with Gail E. Finney and Clifford A. Bernd. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 757 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2011), 195–248; see also the contributions to *Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene in Medieval and Early Modern Literature: Exploration of Textual Presentations of Filth and Water*, ed. A. Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 19 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017).

Middle Ages when pilgrimages increasingly assumed touristic features and were organized professionally by, as we would say today, tour agents.⁶⁴

We can also identify specific interests in pursuing leisure travel in pilgrimage accounts such as by Hans von Waltheym (1474), who took every opportunity to enjoy his time as pleasantly as possible when he crossed Switzerland on his way to southern France, including bathing in hot spas.⁶⁵ Already the Romans, and many other cultures before and after them, were passionately interested in bathing and spent much time for that purpose, which opens yet another perspective toward pleasure and leisure in global cultural-historical terms.⁶⁶

Children and Toys

Although we might not think much about children's or adults' toys and games in the past, recent archeological and social-cultural research has clearly demonstrated how important those objects can be in our analysis of previous cultures and their mentality. They tell us much about cultural practices, values, ideals, and common notions.⁶⁷ There are three major groups of toys from the pre-modern era: "everyday objects that are modified for, or by, children for play; objects expressly designed as toys; and miniature objects which encourage children to

64 *From Medieval Pilgrimage to Religious Tourism: The Social and Cultural Economics of Piety*, ed. William H. Swatos and Luigi Tomasi. Religion in the Age of Transformation (Westport, CT, and London: Praeger, 2002).

65 Albrecht Classen, "A Slow Paradigm Shift: Late Fifteenth-Century Travel Literature and the Perception of the World: The Case of Hans von Waltheym (ca. 1422–1479)," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 42 (2017): 1–21. For bathing and other hygienic efforts as part of people's enjoyment of their free time, see my introduction and contribution to *Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene in Medieval and Early Modern Literature* (see note 63).

66 Marga Weber, *Antike Badekultur*. Beck's archäologische Bibliothek (Munich: Beck, 1996); Karl-Wilhelm Weeber, *Baden, spielen, lachen: wie die Römer ihre Freizeit verbrachten*. Geschichte erzählt (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007); *Aquae salutiferae: il termalismo tra antico e contemporaneo*, ed. Maddalena Bassani, Marianna Bressan, and Francesco Ghedini. Antenor, 29 (Padua: Padova University Press, 2013). The literature on this topic is legion.

67 Helmut Birkhan, *Spielesndes Mittelalter* (see note 10), 11, explicitly emphasizes that game and play are, next to myth and culture, economy and sciences, art and war, some of the most important cultural manifestations in human life. The enjoyment of playing games represents, as Birkhan highlights, apart from the need to intake nourishment and to pursue sexuality, "primäre [] Lebensbedürfnisse []" (11; primary life needs). See my review, forthcoming in *Mediaevistik* 31. Cf. also Jean Verdon, *Les loisirs au moyen âge* (Paris: Librairie Jules Tallandier, 1980); Compton Reeves, *Pleasures and Pastimes in Medieval England* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

imitate the adult world through play.”⁶⁸ Toys and games mirror deeply the conditions of society and vice versa, but life mirrors and can be shaped by those toys and games as well. After all, toys are also often used by adults for very similar purposes, and all people, young and old, enjoy the liberty which games offer during leisure time. Toys duplicate, just as card and dice games, sport competitions, and musical performances, the serious world of the adult and prepare the young person for the life in the future.⁶⁹ By the same token, the analysis of how adults pass their leisure time deeply illuminates culture at large insofar as those private activities reveal much more about the basic sentiments and feelings prevalent at a certain time than most official statements might be willing to do.⁷⁰

Studying the history of games, gaming, sports, etc., makes it possible to grasp critical features of all social interactions within a cultural unit.⁷¹ Game his-

68 Roberta Gilchrist, *Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 148; she in turn draws here from Margarita Sánchez-Romero, “Childhood and the Construction of Gender Identities through Material Culture,” *Childhood in the Past* 1 (2008): 17–37; here 26. Unfortunately, there is no bibliographical entry for this name, a typical example for methods by many scholars not to include notes. For archaeological research focusing on play objects, see Mark A. Hall, “*Jeux sans Frontières*: Play and Performativity or Questions of Identity and Social Interaction Across Town and Country,” *Objects, Environment, and Everyday Life in Medieval Europe*, ed. Ben Jervis, Lee G. Broderick, and Idoia Grau Sologestoa. Studies in the History of Daily Life (800–1600), 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 189–212. His interest is focused on the close connection between toys used in cities and toys used in the countryside.

69 Dorota Żołądz-Strzelczyk, Izabela Gomułka, Katarzyna Kabacińska-Łuczak, Monika Nawrot-Borowska, *Dzieje zabawek dziecięcych na ziemiach polskich do początku XX wieku* (Wrocław: Chronicon, 2016). I appreciate the help by Dorota Żołądz-Strzelczyk to get hold of a copy of this excellent collaborative study and to understand the major conclusions. I rely mostly on the English summary, 467–71, by Dorota Gonczaronek.

70 Gudrun Müller, “Spielzeug,” *Das gemeinsame Haus Europa: Handbuch zur europäischen Kulturgeschichte*, ed. Wulf Köpke and Bernd Schmelz (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999), 1188–98; Broder-Heinrich Christiansen, “Kriegsspielzeug,” *ibid.*, 1199–1203; Marion Fischer, “Kartenspiele, Brettspiele, Geschicklichkeitsspiele,” *ibid.*, 1204–09; Gundolf Krieger, “Traditionelle Sportarten und Spiele,” *ibid.*, 1210–21; Gunter Gebauer, “Spiel,” *Vom Menschen: Handbuch Historische Anthropologie*, ed. Christoph Wulf (Weinheim and Basel: Beltz Verlag, 1997), 1038–48; Norbert Meuter, “Spielen,” *Handbuch Anthropologie: Der Mensch zwischen Natur, Kultur und Technik*, ed. Eike Bohlken and Christian Thies (Stuttgart and Weimar: Verlag J. B. Metzler, 2009), 423–28, highlights and discusses the aspects of functionality, mimesis, and symbolism of play. The theory of play, game, pleasure, and leisure has, of course, been discussed globally as well both among philosophers and cultural anthropologists, historians and art historians. For an interesting case study of British spa cultures in which wealthy individuals enjoyed their free time in attractive spa towns both for medical and for entertainment purposes, see the contribution to this volume by Melvyn Lloyd Draper.

71 *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature*, ed. Serina Patterson. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); for the opposite perspective, considering how the modern

torians have clearly underscored that games and toys have been found already among the oldest civilizations on earth and all over the globe, while here we will focus on the European Middle Ages and early modern time, adding at least some perspectives toward the Arabic culture during the same period.⁷² Our interest here, however, does not rest on the concrete objects that make pleasure and leisure possible. Those were rather common and have been discovered by archeologists at many sites all over Europe, both in cities and in the countryside, whether they were concrete objects to play games, or music instruments.⁷³ Instead, the purpose will be to identify much more specifically what games and toys actually mean in philosophical terms within courtly or late medieval urban society, and beyond. In this way I hope that this study will take the next necessary step to move from the material culture of gaming itself (chess boards, dice, playing cards, etc.) to a more fundamental explanation of the social and philosophical meaning of those objects so central for the world of pleasures and leisure.⁷⁴

world uses the Middle Ages as a medium to play games, see Katharina Zeppezauer-Wachauer, *Kurzwil als Entertainment: Das Mittelalterfest als populärkulturelle Mittelalterrezeption. Historisch-ethnografische Betrachtungen zum Event als Spiel*. Studien zur Unterhaltungswissenschaft, 6 (Marburg: Tectum, 2012); Doris Fischer, *Mittelalter selbst erleben!: Kleidung, Spiel und Speisen – selbst gemacht und ausprobiert* (Darmstadt: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2015). However, the present volume endeavors to understand most seriously what pleasure and leisure really meant in the past not only in material, but also in philosophical, political, and even religious terms. After all, life and game interact most closely with each other, and within pleasure and leisure there are hidden reflections of meaning and relevance.

⁷² Harold James Ruthven Murray, *A History of Board-Games Other than Chess* (see note 7); David Shenk, *The Immortal Game: A History of Chess & Its Consequences or How 32 Carved Pieces on a Board Illuminated Our Understanding of War, Art, Science, and the Human Brain* (New York: Doubleday, 2006); Sonja Musser Golladay, “Los Libros de Acedrex Dados e Tablas: Historical, Artistic and Metaphysical Dimensions of Alfonso X’s Book of Games,” Ph. D. diss., University of Arizona, 2007; Matthew Taylor, *The Association Game: A History of British Football* (Harlow et al.: Pearson Longman, 2007); John Fox, *The Ball: Discovering the Object of the Game* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2012). See also Elizabeth Wilson, *Love Game: A History of Tennis, from Victorian Pastime to Global Phenomenon* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014); Tristan Donovan, *It’s all a game: The History of Board Games from Monopoly to Settlers of Catan* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2017); see also the contributions to *Games of Empire* (see note 4). The list of other studies tracing the history of specific games or sport activities is very long; here suffice it only to emphasize that game and entertainment have always been pursued by people throughout time, even though every individual game has its own history.

⁷³ Roberta Gilchrist, *Medieval Life* (see note 68), 151–54.

⁷⁴ There are many studies that describe medieval life from the infant stage to old age and death, and so also play and games, but then we deal with highly superficial investigations that read more like novels than critical examinations. Robert Fossier, *Das Leben im Mittelalter*,

All people enjoy playing games, just as much as laughing proves to be fundamental of human life, irrespective of what individual critics might have voiced over the centuries.⁷⁵ Without leisure there is no relaxation, and without relaxation, there is no creativity, and without creativity there is no productivity. In short, if society wants to progress, it must embrace both hard work and delightful pleasure, as we would say today. Free time is as important, to a measured degree, as work time.⁷⁶ Whereas previous research commonly identified the cul-

trans. from the French by Michel Bayer, Enrico Heinemann, and Reiner Pfeleiderer (2007; Munich and Zurich: Piper, 2008), offers a really pleasant narrative and touches on many aspects in the everyday life situation of people in the Middle Ages. However, since there are no notes and no bibliographical references, there is no way to verify or falsify any of his claims. Wolfgang Reinhard, *Lebensformen Europas: Eine historische Kulturanthropologie* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2004), 481–86, at least addresses games and athletic activities, but he does not go into any details and covers this topic only fleetingly. We could also list countless other cultural-historical studies addressing the fundamental aspects of the Middle Ages where the issues of pleasures and leisure, games and sports simply do not figure. See, for instance, Alessandro Barbero and Chiara Frugoni, *Medioevo: Storia di voci, racconto di immagini*. Economia Laterza, 725 (Rome and Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, 1999). For excellent images depicting the life of medieval children, see Arsenio e Chiara Frugoni, *Storia di un giorno in una città medievale*. Economia Laterza, 785 (Rome and Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, 1997).

75 See the contributions to *Semiotik, Rhetorik und Soziologie des Lachens: Vergleichende Studien zum Funktionswandel des Lachens vom Mittelalter zur Gegenwart*, ed. Joerg O. Fichte and Hans-Werner Ludwig. Blaubeurer Symposion, 13 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996); and to *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, Its Meaning, and Consequences*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 5 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010); Hans Rudolf Velten, *Scurrilitas: das Lachen, die Komik und der Körper in Literatur und Kultur des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2017); see my review in *Mediaevistik* 30 (2018): 543–45.

76 Peter Borsay, *A History of Leisure: The British Experience since 1500* (Oxford: Macmillan Education – Palgrave, 2006). The culture of leisure is commonly detected only in the modern era since the eighteenth or nineteenth century; see Rudy Koshar, *Histories of Leisure*, ed. Rudy Koshar (Oxford: Berg, 2002); Adam Matthew, *Leisure, Travel & Mass Culture: The History of Tourism* (Marlborough, Wiltshire: Adam Matthew, 2016); Johanna Niedbalski, *Die ganze Welt des Vergnügens: Berliner Vergnügungsparks der 1880er bis 1930er Jahre* (Berlin-Brandenburg: be.bra wissenschaft, 2018). For a study on modern pleasure and leisure, see the contributions to *Die vergnügte Gesellschaft*, ed. Michael Heinlein and Katharina Seßler. Soziologische Theorie (Bielefeld: transcript, 2014). As much as it seems to be true that our modern world is deeply determined by those aspects, with ever more people taking vacations, seeking entertainment, enjoying leisure activities, etc. as little can we support the general claim that all those aspects emerged only in the time after, say, 1600. Of course, tourism, the entertainment industry, movies, vacationing, etc. are all typical features of the modern world, but this does not necessitate that people in the Middle Ages, for instance, knew little to nothing about pleasures and leisure.

ture of leisure with the rise of the modern world,⁷⁷ here I would suggest that this element can, of course, already be discovered in the Middle Ages and earlier. We are, in other words, on the brink of busting another myth, this time pertaining to a previously ignored but certainly fundamental need of human beings to enjoy their life occasionally simply unproductively and not to be limited by the demands of war and religion, for instance.⁷⁸

Toys are only seemingly innocent by-products of culture. In reality, they allow us to understand how people viewed children, how they evaluated them, how they tried to help their children to find some entertainment, and thereby to learn about serious matters and objects in real life. And to be honest, many adults both then and today have had their own toys, which could be anything from a sword, a bat, a tool, or a ball. According to Jan Buja, a toy is

a material object made especially for ludic purposes, which displays cultural elements characteristic of a given period or previous periods within the scope of material, spiritual or social culture, and which expresses them in a way evoking certain ludic attitudes, and through its mediation it forms physical, psychological, or emotional developments.⁷⁹

In order to study the world of games, such as toys, but then also card games and dice, we must rely, on the one hand, on concrete historical toys, and on the other on the wealth of written documents and iconography where we can find countless references to toys (and games), which thus emerge as important representatives of everyday life in the Middle Ages and beyond. Analyzing the history of toys and other tools of entertainment makes it specifically possible to understand the psychological approaches to childhood since they reflect standard norms of the relationships between children and adults.⁸⁰ However, the issue here rests on pleasure and leisure, and touches on childhood only marginally,

77 As the study by Paul Milliman, "Games and Pastimes" (see note 8), demonstrates, however, specialized medieval research has already worked to dismantle that myth for a long time.

78 See the contributions to *Misconceptions about the Middle Ages*, ed. Stephen J. Harris and Bryon L. Grigsby. Routledge Studies in Medieval Religion and Culture, 7 (New York: Routledge, 2008); Albrecht Classen, *The Medieval Chastity Belt: A Myth-Making Process*. The New Middle Ages (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, England, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

79 Jan Bujak, *Zabawki w Europie: Zarys dziejów – rozwój zainteresowań*. Rozprawy habilitacyjne / Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 139 (Cracow: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1988), 24; here taken from Gonczaronek's translation (see note 69).

80 Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 164–76. However, like many other scholars before him, he views both toys and games as typical of and virtually exclusive to childhood.

as much as a child's play matters in many different contexts as well.⁸¹ When Parzival in Wolfram von Eschenbach's eponymous romance arrives at King Artus's court and demands to be knighted and to receive the armor which the Red Knight wears, who had left the court in anger over a conflict, the seneschal Keye fully approves this request, urging Artus to let the young stranger try his best in this deadly game since it would not matter if he were to lose his life in this challenge. Just as in a hunt of a boar, the death of a dog would have to be accepted. Life is always at any rate filled with risks and dangers, as in any game, which he even describes in detail, comparing the youth's struggle with the whip and the top.⁸²

One charming literary example from the late twelfth century, Konrad von Fussesbrunnen *Die Kindheit Jesu*, demonstrates how much the world of children could be a matter of religious reflections, even with a considerable amount of humor.⁸³ The poet relates how young Jesus and his friends spend their time trying to catch fish without nets by way of directing the creek into freshly dug furrows and then blocking the fish from returning to their original water. In that moment a conflict arises which makes Jesus kill another child, who had stomped on his own earthwork, simply by the power of his words (2755–58). Later, after an uproar has occurred, his mother coaxingly asks him what has happened, and he explains, “dâ zebrach er mir mîn spil” (2799; he destroyed my game = furrow). Thereupon, but quite grudgingly Jesus agrees to let the dead companion return to life on behalf of his mother, so he proves his divine nature already so early in life. But the word “spil” carries various connotations and can also refer to the playful behavior of lion cubs whom Jesus subsequently encounters in the mountains (2845). To be sure, child play matters centrally in this religious

81 *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: The Results of a Paradigm Shift in the History of Mentality*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005).

82 Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*. Studienausgabe. Mittelhochdeutscher Text nach der sechsten Ausgabe von Karl Lachmann, Übersetzung von Peter Knecht, Einführung zum Text von Bernd Schirok (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), Book 5, ch. 150, vv. 11–22. For a solid introduction and review of the relevant research, see, above all, Joachim Bumke, *Wolfram von Eschenbach*. 8th, completely rev. ed. Sammlung Metzler, 36 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2004). See also Michael Dallapiazza, *Wolfram von Eschenbach: Parzival*. Klassiker Lektüren, 12 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2009); *Wolfram von Eschenbach: Ein Handbuch*, ed. Joachim Heinze. 2 vols (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011).

83 Konrad von Fussesbrunnen, *Die Kindheit Jesu*, ed. Hans Fromm and Klaus Grubmüller (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973).

verse tale and illustrates both Jesus's normal character as a child and also his true identity, God's son.⁸⁴

As we have learned already for some time, neither children nor childhood was ignored by the adults in the Middle Ages and the early modern age, even if young people were often depicted as rather immature and dedicated to innocent love, such as in Konrad Fleck's *Flore und Blanscheffur* (ca. 1220/1230) and many of its pan-European manifestations. We have learned to understand that our perception of that world depends heavily on the lens that we use and the material or sources that we consult.⁸⁵ Maybe the transition from childhood to adulthood was not as clearly marked then as it might be today, but at any case all those literary documents, coupled with concrete objects (toys, dolls, etc., see below), unmistakably confirm that there was a specific sense about the value of play time, entertainment, and personal enjoyment. Sometimes, when adults observe children play, they even realize the shortcomings of their

84 Medieval German literature contains numerous passages where the word 'spil' appears, often in quite different contexts; see Matthias Lexer, *Mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1876), cols. 1091–92; cf. Helmut Fischer, "Spiele" (see note 47). For the world of playing cards, see Detlef Hoffmann, *Kultur- und Kunstgeschichte der Spielkarte*. Mit einer Dokumentation von Margot Dietrich zu den Spielen des Deutschen Spielkarten-Museums Leinfelden-Echterdingen (Marburg: Jonas-Verlag, 1995); Sylvia Mann, *Alle Karten auf dem Tisch: Geschichte der standardisierten Spielkarten aller Welt*. Bestands- und Ausstellungskatalog des Deutschen Spielkarten-Museums, 4 (Leinfelden-Echterdingen: Deutsches Spielkarten-Museum, 1990); globally, see Birkhan, *Spielendes Mittelalter* (see note 10). See also Maria Raid, "'Ein Amt bekleiden...': Kleidung und Mode als Ausdruck von Stand und Stellung in der Gesellschaft des 15. Jahrhunderts am Beispiel des Ambraser Hofämterspiels," M.A. thesis, Vienna 2017. I am grateful to the author for alerting me to her valuable study and for providing me with a copy. She focuses on textiles and fashion depicted on those cards as an expression of the social status of the various members of the court, which she could illustrate through a close study of this fifteenth-century card game. She basically concludes (12, note 22), summarizing the various statements by art historians, that we cannot determine with any real credibility where and when this card game was created, apart from the rough dates around the middle of the fifteenth century. Particularly the attribution to Ladislas Posthumous as patron seems most problematic, cf. Timothy B. Husband, *The World in Play: Luxury Cards, 1430–1540* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 60–61.

85 Christine Putzo, *Konrad Fleck, 'Flore und Blanscheffur': Text und Untersuchung*. Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 143 (Berlin, Munich, and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015); see also Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (see note 80); cf. also the contributions to *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (see note 81); to *A Cultural History of Childhood and Family in the Middle Ages*, ed. Louise J. Wilkinson. A Cultural History of Childhood and Family, 2 (Oxford: Berg, 2010); and to *Childhood in History: Perceptions of Children in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, ed. Reidar Aasgaard and Cornelia Horn, with Oana Maria Cojocaru (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018).

own approaches to life and then are suddenly willing to change, if not transform their own viewpoints or habits, as we learn in the farcical play by Marguerite de Navarre (1492–1549), *L'Inquisiteur* (ca. 1535 or 1536).⁸⁶ We find an even earlier example, though differently structured, in the verse narrative (*mære*) “The Pious Miller’s Wife” by Heinrich Kaufringer (ca. 1400).⁸⁷ The modern example fitting this model would be Michael Ende’s famous novel for young readers, *Momo oder Die seltsame Geschichte von den Zeit-Dieben und von dem Kind, das den Menschen die gestohlene Zeit zurückbrachte* (1973).⁸⁸

Toys and Dolls as Cultural Products

Naturally, in the course of time the number of references to toys and games, and related objects or subject matters grows tremendously, especially if we think of the copious didactic treatises, moralizing statements, and comments by medical authorities, then of diaries, letters, and travelogues. Nevertheless, even the pre-modern world was filled with toys since children have always been in need of them, as parents regularly recognized throughout time. Moreover, toys are always age specific, and adults enjoy their own toys, including games, all of which constitutes an alternative existence, a mirror where all activities are playful and fanciful, opening up new possibilities and imaginations. But neither toys nor games are simply a matter specifically for children; instead they pertain to human culture and can be found among all age groups and social classes, among men and women.

86 This is extensively discussed by Sharon Diane King in her contribution to this volume. The issue, children teaching adult, is a topic intensively discussed in many publications, blogs, and other media outlets; see, for instance, Luminita D. Saviuc, “15 Things A Child Can Teach An Adult,” online blog at <https://www.purposefairy.com/5305/15-things-a-child-can-teach-an-adult/> (last accessed on Feb. 3, 2019).

87 *Love, Life, and Lust in Heinrich Kaufringer’s Verse Narratives*. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 467. MRTS Texts for Teaching, 9 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2014), no. 17, pp. 95–98. I’ll discuss more of his texts below and will then also reflect on additional research.

88 Michael Ende, *Momo oder die seltsame Geschichte von den Zeit-Dieben und von dem Kind, das den Menschen die gestohlene Zeit zurückbrachte: ein Märchen-Roman* (Stuttgart: Thienemann, 1973); Hans-Heino Ewers, *Michael Ende neu entdecken: Was Jim Knopf, Momo und die Unendliche Geschichte Erwachsenen zu sagen haben* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 2018). *Momo* has been translated into more than forty languages and is one of the most successful books for young (and adult) readers of our time. It was also transformed into radio plays, theater plays, operas, movies, musicals, ballets, and other media. For a good overview of the most important versions, see [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Momo_\(Roman\)#Rezeption](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Momo_(Roman)#Rezeption) (last accessed on Feb. 3, 2019).

This book hence deals with the wide world of games and playing, including sport events, competitions, tournaments, and the like, without necessarily limiting our approaches to a strict boundary between the world of children and the world of adults. Contrary to many modern assumptions, the pre-modern world was already very much interested in athletic competitions and regarded them as essential for the physical training of children and youth preparing them for their adult life.⁸⁹ These are all human activities that create a joyful sensation and temporarily alleviate the individual from the serious challenges in life, without leaving that life completely outside. If something does not work out in the game, or in the play, there is no serious problem since it can simply be repeated. As much as all games and playful activities operate with rules and regulations, with limitations and boundaries (game field, for instance), they are all infused with a strong sense of joy and freedom.⁹⁰

The Physical World of Toys

However, we must not forget the world of materiality, the study of toys and games makes it possible to gain deep insight into mental-historical structures and concepts of everyday-life culture. An extreme example would be, for instance, dolls or similar objects placed in pre-modern graves, either serving apotropaic functions to prevent the phenomenon of revenance (return of the ghosts of the dead haunting the living), or perhaps as sentimental funerary objects. Irrespective of how we would have to evaluate those objects, they undoubtedly represent a world of gaming and playfulness duplicating hard-core reality.⁹¹

Toy museums all over Europe (and in other parts of the world) prove to be excellent resources for this large and fundamental topic, as Dorota Żołędź-Strzelczyk, Izabela Gomułka, Katarzyna Kabacińska-Luczak, and Monika Nawrot-Borowska have demonstrated recently, taking us from the Middle Ages to

⁸⁹ August Nitschke, *Bewegungen in Mittelalter und Renaissance: Kämpfe, Spiele, Tänze, Zeremoniell und Umgangsformen*. Historisches Seminar, 2 (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1987); Klaus Willner, *Vom Spiel zum Sport: eine Villingener Chronik der einzelnen Leibesübungen vom Mittelalter bis nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Villingen: Todt-Druck, 1998); Allen Guttman, *Sports: The First Five Millennia* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004); Uwe Mosebach, *Sportgeschichte: von den Anfängen bis in die moderne Zeit* (Aachen: Meyer & Meyer Verlag, 2017).

⁹⁰ Birkhan, *Spielendes Mittelalter* (see note 10), 13–14.

⁹¹ Romedio Schmitz-Esser, *Der Leichnam im Mittelalter: Einbalsamierung, Verbrennung und die kulturelle Konstruktion des toten Körpers*. *Mittelalter-Forschungen*, 48 (2014; Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2016), 451, note 103.

the twentieth century. They also include research on toy production and toy marketing, which adds an important socio-economic dimension to the issue at question here.⁹² Dealing with toys naturally leads to a thorough study of the lives of children in the pre-modern era, but I will leave this aside here because we have dealt with that issue already at great length in a 2005 volume,⁹³ and because the focus will rest more on the global topic of pleasure and leisure, moving us away from the literary and historical accounts addressing people's daily lives while at court, in war, or on travel, and turning us to the other aspect, the entertainment which was always looked for and practiced as well, though less reported about in specific terms.

There is certainly a qualitative difference between a child's play/toy/game and an adult's game etc., but not so much in terms of the meaning and relevance of play within the wider context of human existence because the game takes the individual out of the realm of material reality into an imaginary world, very parallel to the former, also determined by rules and regulations, but without involving serious consequences concerning one's social, political, religious, or material condition. In Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Titarel*, a fragment that he composed at the end of his life, ca. 1220, drawing from some loose narrative threads in his own grail romance, *Parzival* (ca. 1205), real life and the game world (dolls) are intriguingly merged with each other.⁹⁴ At one point young Sigûne is informed that she is to move to live with her aunt, Herzeloyde, who wants to raise this pre-

92 Dorota Żołądz-Strzelczyk, Izabela Gomułka, Katarzyna Kabacińska-Łuczak, Monika Nawrot-Borowska, *Dzieje zabawek dziecięcych na ziemiach polskich* (see note 69). Their extensive bibliography is mostly dominated by Polish titles, but they also include some studies in other European languages. This volume is richly illustrated, at least concerning the time from the sixteenth through the twentieth century. It is almost tragic that western researchers hardly know Polish or other Slavic languages, but I am not aware of any solution to this huge linguistic hurdle. Who can handle more than two or three foreign languages? See also Rita Buchholz, "Mittelalterlich-frühneuzeitliche Spielzeugfunde aus Wismar," *Wismarer Studien zur Archäologie* 1 (1990): 56–61; "Daz kint spilete und was fro": *Spielen vom Mittelalter bis heute*, ed. Manfred Glaser. Ausstellungen zur Archäologie in Lübeck, 2 (Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild, 1995); Dirk Scheidemantel, "Die Würfel sind gefallen: Spiel und Muße im Alltagsleben des Mittelalters," *Dresden 8000: eine Zeitreise*, ed. Judith Oexle (Dresden: Landesamt für Archäologie mit Landesmuseum für Vorgeschichte, 2006), 184–87; Marianne Erath, "Die Würfelherstellung in Europa im Mittelalter und der frühen Neuzeit," *Archäologie als Sozialgeschichte: Studien zu Siedlung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im frühgeschichtlichen Mitteleuropa. Festschrift für Heiko Steuer zum 60. Geburtstag*. Internationale Archäologie: Studia honoraria, 9 (Rahden/Westphalia: Leidorf, 1999), 307–28.

93 *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (see note 81).

94 Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Titarel*, ed., trans., commentary, and an intro. by Helmut Brackert and Stephan Fuchs-Jolie (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 48. Here I use my own translation.

cious descendent of a long line of worthy kings and queens. The narrator has already relayed much about the tragic history of the Grail family, but with Sigûne, the last heir, new hope seems to arise, especially because she shines through her virtues, honor, and beauty (stanza 32). Curiously, when Sigûne is told that she would have to go to Herzeloyde's court for her further education, she immediately realizes that this would represent the essential transition from childhood to adulthood, wherefore she draws a direct connection between her dolls and future lovers:

Das kint sprach: "liebes väterlin, du hayss mir gewinnen
mein schrein vollen tocken, wenn ich zu meiner muomen vare von hynnen.
so bin ich zu der ferte wol berichtet.
es lebt manig ritter, der sich in meinen dienst noch verphlichtet.'

(stanza 30)

[The child said: "My dear father, then arrange that my chest
filled with dolls be brought to me when I will travel from here to my aunt.
Then I will be well prepared for the voyage.
There are many knights who will commit to serve me."]

Even if her remark might smack of precocity, it clearly indicates how much Sigûne is aware of how much courtly culture with its ideals of love wooing represents a form of game in which she would be easily able to participate, merging playful game (dolls) with courtly love (erotic). Although still a child, this young protagonist has learned already and appreciates the intricacies of adult life, a world where playful operations are just as important as military, religious, or political movements.

We find evidence for the presence of toys and dolls as important elements in the lives of young people, whether at court or in the countryside also in the anonymous, rather hilarious *mære* (verse narrative) "Dis ist von dem heselin" (This is about the little bunny rabbit) from the late thirteenth century. A young knight catches a little bunny rabbit and decides to take it to his beloved as a gift. When he passes through a village, a young peasant woman spies the delightful animal and immediately desires to acquire it as her pet. She offers all her treasures for the barter, such as rings, ten dice, and a valuable belt, an odd mixture of playthings and fashionable attributes of a young noble lady.⁹⁵ As the young belle indicates, her mother had given those to her as gifts, proba-

⁹⁵ Quoted from *Novellistik des Mittelalters: Märendichtung*, ed., trans. and commentary by Klaus Grubmüller. Bibliothek des Mittelalters, 23 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1996), 594, vv. 89–100.

bly, if we disregard the dice, as potential objects for her future dowry. Of course, the knight refuses that offer and insists on receiving for his animal nothing but her “minne,” that is, her sexual favor.

Although she does not understand what he means, being unfamiliar with that term, she agrees and lets him search for it on her body, meaning that she allows him to make love with her without fully understanding the implications. Her naïveté and innocence come through subsequently when her mother learns the whole story and beats her badly. In order to compensate for her failure, the maid later waits for the knight to return and begs him to give her back her “minne,” to which he happily obliges and which then works out well for both insofar as the young woman can keep the bunny rabbit and ultimately, through curious circumstances, is chosen by the knight as his future wife.⁹⁶ Even though the maid is clearly identified as a woman living in a village, she later rises to the rank of nobility because the knight has recognized her purity, innocence, beauty, and also sexual attraction, which all far exceed the qualities of a designated aristocratic fiancée for him. For our purposes, however, we only need to recognize that the poet projects a mixed situation, shedding light on what kind of toys or jewelry a young country maid might possess.

Even when medieval poets barely enter into detail about the protagonists’ leisure activities, as here is the case, they do not shy away from mentioning at least that there has always been time of struggle and time of entertainment, both dimensions closely correlated with each other. In Sir Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte Darthur* (first printed in 1485), for instance, we are told of Sir Launcelot’s many efforts to carry out deeds of arms on behalf of his beloved, Queen Guenever, which is then coupled with the significant statement: “Thus Sir Launcelot rested him long with play and game. And then he thought himself to prove himself in strange adventures. ...”⁹⁷ In other words, chivalry and knighthood were

96 Albrecht Classen, “The Fourteenth-Century Verse Novella *Dis ist von dem Heselín*: Eroticism, Social Discourse, and Ethical Criticism,” *Orbis Litterarum* 60.4 (2005): 260–77; id., “Utopian Space in the Countryside: Love and Marriage Between a Knight and a Peasant Girl in Medieval German Literature. Hartmann von Aue’s *Der arme Heinrich*, Anonymous, ‘Dis ist von dem Heselín,’ Walther von der Vogelweide, Oswald von Wolkenstein, and Late-Medieval Popular Poetry,” *Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: The Spatial Turn in Premodern Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen, with the collaboration of Christopher R. Clason. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 9 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 251–79.

97 Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D’Arthur*, ed. Janet Cowen. With an Introduction by John Lawlor (1969; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1979), Book VI, 194. See also *Le morte Arthur: A Critical Edition*, ed. P. F. Hissiger (1975; Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2015). This is, of course, a much discussed romance; see, for instance, the contributions to *A Companion to Malory*, ed. Elizabeth Archibald. Arthurian Studies, 37 (Cambridge: Brewer, 1996); K. S. Whetter, *The Manuscript*

determined both by serious fighting and also by playfully passing time and seeking relaxation. It is not uncommon to discover references to board and dice games that attract the attention of a prince or a ruler, such as Emperor Otto I the Great (912–973), whom the chronicler monk Widukind of Corvey describes as strongly interested not only in hunting, but also in the “*ludi tabularum*,” among many other forms of entertainment. According to the author, Otto demonstrated thereby his extraordinary courtly education and strong character qualities. The anonymous poet of the Old French *chanson de geste*, *Daurel et Beton*, confirmed this observation when he has Beton prove his noble birth already at young age both through his impeccable personality and behavior and also through his strong interest in various board games which he masters effortlessly. And the didactic author Aegidius Romanus (also: Giles of Rome; late thirteenth to the early fourteenth century) emphasized in his *De regimine principum* that rulers ought to pursue the practice of embracing the “*ludus liberalis*” and thus the virtue of “*iocunditas*,” that is, to pursue games during their spare time and thus to step away from the hard business of governing, which would help them, if they observe moderation in all activities, to direct their energies toward performing good deeds. As Sophie Caflisch has recently pointed out, the ethical ideals of a ruler find their expression in his ability to seek the middle ground in all of games and thus to enjoy his free time in a virtuous and yet also pleasant manner.⁹⁸

Structural and Conceptional Components of Leisure Activities

Social conditions, ranks, gender positions, or age are not supposed to be operative in games since there, as in every play, social class distinctions and other game external criteria are removed, and only the principles of the game determine all moves. According to Roger Caillois (1913–1978), all games take place within the category of *agon* (competition), *alea* (chance), *mimicry* (imitation [of reality]), and *ilinx* (deception, cunning, trickery, etc., i.e., games that involve the pursuit of the feeling of vertigo and dizziness so that habitual perception is

and Meaning of Malory's *Morte Darthur*: Rubrication, Commemoration, Memorialization. *Arthurian Studies*, 84 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2017).

⁹⁸ Sophie Caflisch, “Macht das Spiel den Herrscher? Brettspiele als höfische *probitas*,” *Games of Empires* (see note 4), 169–88. I have drawn those three examples from her article.

disrupted).⁹⁹ However, in contrast to human reality, within game/play, failure or loss is not of great or decisive significance and would actually inspire the player to try harder, again, or differently, especially because, as Birkhan now formulates, the game provides a form of mask (*mimicry*) with which, according to Rainer Buland and Ulrich Schädler, the following types of entertainment can be realized: board and dice game, sportive activities, gambling, and play or acting on the stage.¹⁰⁰ Game can also become very addictive, as the existence of casinos all over the world today indicates. The pre-modern world might not have had quite the same commercial perception of and approach to ‘games,’ but the barrage of criticism against all gaming activities we have already dealt with above underscores how pervasive such extreme forms of pleasure activities could have been addictive already then.¹⁰¹

Refining the previous observation, in order to gain a solid handle on these and related topics, including adult games and toys, and to comprehend the vast domain of pleasure and leisure in the pre-modern world, we must draw from many different scholarly disciplines, including archaeology, history, literary studies, art history, religion, philosophy, history of medicine, history of fashion, history of furniture, and also psychology, if possible under the historical circumstances.

After all, as cultural historians have observed already for a long time, despite their playful and seemingly irrelevant nature, games and toys are a very serious matter both for their own time and lives and for us as critical researchers. For instance, it now appears to make good sense to identify the entire concept of the courtly world as a game in abstract or metaphorical terms, which would

99 Roger Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games*, trans. from the French by Meyer Barash (1958; New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961); he emphasizes that those four categories often appear in pairs or bundles and interact with each other easily, 71.

100 Birkhan, *Spielendes Mittelalter* (see note 10); see also the numerous volumes in the book series *Homo ludens – der spielende Mensch: internationale Beiträge des Institutes für Spielforschung und Spielpädagogik an der Hochschule “Mozarteum” Salzburg*, ed. Rainer Buland and Ulrich Schädler, vol. 1–10 (Munich: Emil Katzschler, 1991–2010); Rainer Buland, *Wenn der Mensch nach dem Glück greift: über Gewinner und Verlierer* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2005).

101 For further examples in late medieval German literature, see the contribution to this volume by Chiara Benati. For game addiction today, see, for instance, Neils Clark and P. Shavaun Scott, *Game Addiction: The Experience and the Effects* (Jefferson, NC; McFarland, 2009); *Gaming and Technology Addiction: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice*. Critical Explorations. 2 vols. (Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2017); Adam Alter, *Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017). The literature on this topic is expansive, but see the technically detailed study by David Parlett, *The Oxford History of Board Games* (see note 4).

allow us to gain a much better understanding of the highly contradictory, esoteric, and ambivalent phenomenon of courtly love as well.¹⁰² Viewed through this lens, both theoretical reflections (Andreas Capellanus) and romances (Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan* or *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*), both courtly love poetry (the first *troubadour* poet Guillaume IX or the famous Middle High German *Minnesänger* Walther von der Vogelweide), contradictory engagements of men and women in the discourse of love (Marie de France [Anglo-Norman], Boccaccio [Italian], Geoffrey Chaucer [Middle English], etc.), and philosophical ruminations on the nature of game (Nicholas of Cusa) make much more sense than before and prove to be talking to each other in a larger cultural-historical framework.

We might even go so far as to consider the most intriguing letters exchanged between Abelard and Heloise as a form of intellectual game which continues to occupy us until today, considering the extent to which scholars debate continuously about the authenticity of that correspondence, the literary, philosophical, and theological sources, and the true meaning of the opinions voiced by those two highly educated writers.¹⁰³ Dialectics is a form of game, as it involves debates and provocation, confrontation and agreement. Those who do not want to or cannot engage in physical activities, certainly delight in games of the

102 Albrecht Classen, "Spiel als Kultur und Spiel als Medium der Lebensbewältigung im Mittelalter: Vom Schachspiel und Liebeswerben hin bis zur literarischen Spielführung," *Études Germaniques* 73.3 (2018): 333–55.

103 *The Letters of Heloise and Abelard: A Translation of Their Collected Correspondence and Related Writings*, trans. and ed. by Mary Martin McLaughlin with Bonnie Wheeler. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); see also the contributions to *Listening to Heloise: The Voice of a Twelfth-Century Woman*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler. The New Middle Ages (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000). In a previous study I highlighted the dialectic nature of these letters, "Dialectics and Courtly Love: Abelard and Heloise, Andreas Capellanus, and the *Carmina Burana*," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 23 (2013): 161–83. See also Deborah Fraioli, "Assessing Medieval Moral Outrage: the Correspondence of Abelard and Heloise," *Mediaevistik* 25 (2012): 55–68. Musing on how the intellectual posterity responded to this correspondence, she argues that "they reveled in the intellectual pleasure of unmasking the hidden marrow of the correspondence, recognizing the moral substratum that underlies the correspondence, yet delighting in the rude, boisterous, and comic manner in which it is delivered through the *personae* of Abelard and Heloise" (68). Generally, she observes numerous cases of possibly deliberate dissonances that ought to have provoked a strong reaction by her audience that was thus invited to play the intellectual game with her to debate the problematic propositions contained both in Abelard's *Historia calamitatum* and in Heloise's correspondence with him.

mind, which might fundamentally explain many features of the intellectual world in the Middle Ages.¹⁰⁴

Game and Pastime in Mysticism

Surprisingly, even within the world of medieval mysticism, the idea of game gained traction because it allowed the authors to explain the free flow of the loving exchange between the Godhead and the loving soul. The thirteenth-century Beguine turned mystic Mechthild von Magdeburg (d. 1282), for instance, resorted to the notion of play in order to come to terms with the idea of the mystical revelation.¹⁰⁵ The Godhead welcomes her soul by way of resorting to courtly lan-

104 Catherine Brown, *Contrary Things: Exegesis, Dialectic, and the Poetics of Didacticism*. Figure: Reading Medieval Culture (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); Constance Brittain Bouchard, *“Every Valley Shall Be Exalted”: The Discourse of Opposites in Twelfth-Century Thought* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 145: “Whether discussing binary opposites or the two extreme poles of a continuum, theologians and vernacular writers alike deliberately *valued* both halves of the equation.” As to the discourse on love, also a highly sophisticated game, see Peter L. Allen, *The Art of Love: Amatory Fiction from Ovid to the Romance of the Rose*. Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992). I have proposed already before the thesis that courtly love was a game, Albrecht Classen, “Erotik als Spiel, Spiel als Leben, Leben als Erotik: Komparatistische Überlegungen zur Literatur des europäischen Mittelalters,” *Mediaevistik* 2 (1989): 7–42; id., “Minnesang als Spiel. Sinnkonstitution auf dem Schachbrett der Liebe,” *Studi Medievali Serie Terza*, XXXVI.1 (1995): 211–39; see now Beate Kellner, *Spiel der Liebe im Minnesang* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2018), who suggests that courtly love poetry was a medium to experiment and play with many different strategies and options in courtly society. I have commented on her study at greater length in note 135 below. See also my review in *Mediaevistik* 32 (2019 or 2020), forthcoming.

105 See the English translation, Mechthild of Magdeburg, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, trans. & intro. Frank Tobin, preface Margot Schmidt (New York and Mahwah, NY: Paulist Press, 1998), but I will use my own here because I disagree with some of the specifics of this translation in order to stay closer to the original; for the historical-critical edition, see Mechthild von Magdeburg, *‘Das Fließende Licht der Gottheit’: Nach der Einsiedler Handschrift in kritischem Vergleich mit der gesamten Überlieferung*, ed. Hans Neumann. Vol. 1: *Text*, ed. Gisela Vollmann-Profe. Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 100 (Munich and Zürich: Artemis, 1990). Her work has been discussed many times and has been recognized as a major contribution to mysticism, mystical literature, and medieval women’s literature; see, for instance, Hildegard Elisabeth Keller, *My secret is mine: Studies on Religion and Eros in the German Middle Ages*. Studies in Spirituality Supplements, 4 (Leuven: Peeters, 2000); David F. Tinsley, *The Scourge and the Cross: Ascetic Mentalities of the Later Middle Ages*. Mediaevalia Groningana New Series, 14 (Paris, Leuven, and Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2010); Balázs J. Nemes, *Von der Schrift zum Buch – vom Ich zum Autor: Zur Text- und Autorkonstitution in Überlieferung und Rezeption des ‘Fließenden Lichts der Gottheit’ Mechthilds von Magdeburg*. Bibliotheca-

guage and “clothes her in the garments that one fittingly wears in a palace” (40), treating the soul as the most ardently sought after beloved. Stunningly, the soul is then taken to a secret spot where she must speak only for herself and cannot think of anyone else because the Godhead “wants to play a game that the body does not know, nor the peasants at their plows, nor knights at their tournaments, nor his lovely mother, Mary – not even she may play it there” (41).¹⁰⁶ Game and love join forces and transform the soul into the most beloved entity in the universe, with the Godhead completely focused on her and giving her all of its attention.

In that process, however, the soul is transported far beyond all earthly dimensions and loses her ability even to talk about what she witnessed: “a blissful place of which I neither will nor can speak. It is too difficult” (41). This is, of course, the well-known concept of the “*unio mystica*,” which constitutes one of the core concepts in mysticism. If we tried to translate it into the common language, then we suddenly face an apophatic expression about the very nature of love which reveals much more about this emotional experience than any verbose, eloquent, rhetorically skillful explanation might be able to achieve.

Just as in a game, the outcome of the vision is not predictable, and yet the mystic is graced with having been invited to join a game played by the Godhead with her soul. The game the mystic alludes to, however, is not comparable to any other games, that is, ordinary human activities determined by specific rules and regulations. At the very moment when the union with the divine is virtually complete, a kind of spiritual orgasm takes place, and yet precisely then the soul has to depart again, as she explains filled with sorrow: “Wenne das spil allerbest ist, so muos man es lassen” (8; When the game is at its best, one has to let it go).¹⁰⁷ Even though the soul no longer wants to return to the body because the experience together with the Godhead makes it virtually impossible for her to do so, the latter emphasizes: “din stimme ist ein seitenspil minen oren, dinu wort

ca Germanica, 55 (Tübingen and Basel: A. Francke Verlag, 2010); Albrecht Classen, *Reading Medieval European Women Writers: Strong Literary Witnesses from the Past* (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2016).

106 Research on Mechthild is truly rich, but the relationship between spiritual love and game does not seem to have been noted yet; see, for instance, Elizabeth A. Andersen, *The Voices of Mechthild of Magdeburg* (Oxford, Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2000), but again, her focus rests on the various voices speaking up in the mystic’s visions. See now Albrecht Classen, “Mystical Literature for the Modern Reader – Responses to a Dilemma and Pragmatic Suggestions: With a Focus on Mechthild of Magdeburg,” *Studies in Spirituality* 28 (2018): 145–67.

107 Albrecht Classen, “The Dialectics of Mystical Love in the Middle Ages: Violence/Pain and Divine Love in the Mystical Visions of Mechthild of Magdeburg and Marguerite Porète,” *Studies in Spirituality* 20 (2010): 143–60.

sint wurtzen minem munde, dine gerunge sint die miltekeit miner gabe" (8; your voice is music for my ears played on a string instrument; your words are roots in my mouth; your desires are the mercy of my gifts).

Tragically, however, as Mechthild then also indicates, as soon as the height of all blissfulness has been achieved, she must leave again and return to her own life. The out-of-body sensation is over, the 'game' is accomplished, and deep disappointment sets in, which can make perfect sense even in modern-day jargon and thinking because we are all only too aware of the impossibility of maintaining the exceedingly fleeting sense of happiness achieved at special moments even under the best circumstances. Love and game thus prove to be interchangeable and co-dependent functions, specifically in the mystical context, but it is also a critical element in the courtly discourse on love.¹⁰⁸ The experience of a game within the mystical context thus emerges as a metaphor of great significance. Pleasure, to use a related phrase central for our investigations, thus proves to be a fundamental notion in human epistemology insofar as the freedom of the game activity frees the individual from all physical detractions and frees the mystic to experience the revelation of the Godhead.¹⁰⁹

Moving forward from here, we can easily recognize that the notion of game also undergirded Baroque culture which was theater-oriented at any event, relying heavily on pleasure principle and performance on the courtly stage.¹¹⁰ However, that kind of game was always predicated on publicity, transforming the material world into a theater stage, although then the spiritual dimension was absent because the visual representations of the Baroque world aimed at the projection of worldly power, so clearly demarcating the separation between the upper and the lower social classes. Nevertheless, even then each group assumed an essential role in that social game.

The question, however, to what extent games should be allowed or even embraced as healthy activities to relieve the exhausted mind, and the issue whether gambling games should be banned principally, as many theologians argued,

108 Albrecht Classen, "Worldly Love – Spiritual Love. The Dialectics of Courtly Love in the Middle Ages," *Studies in Spirituality* 11 (2001): 166–86; id., "Die flämische Mystikerin Hadewijch als erotische Liebesdichterin," *Studies in Spirituality* 12 (2002): 23–42.

109 Andrea Zech, *Spielarten des Gottes-Genusses: Semantiken des Genießens in der europäischen Frauenmystik des 13. Jahrhunderts*. Historische Semantik, 25 (Göttingen and Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015).

110 *Spiel!: Kurzweil in Renaissance und Barock: eine Ausstellung des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien, Schloss Ambras Innsbruck 16. Juni bis 2. Oktober 2016*, ed. Sabine Haag (Vienna: KHM Museumsverband, 2016); Anna K. Nardo, *The Ludic Self in Seventeenth-Century English Literature* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991).

were hot items still in the eighteenth century, as demonstrated by the lengthy entry on “Spiele” (games) in Johann Heinrich Zedler’s *Universal-Lexicon* (1743).¹¹¹ In the famous *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences*, edited by Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d’Alembert from 1751 to 1780, we find an extensive article on “Jeu,” in which historical, social, political, and cultural dimensions of game are addressed without any prejudice.¹¹² The topics of “Plaisir, Délice, Volupté” are also covered at great length,¹¹³ whereas “Loisir” is mentioned only in passing.¹¹⁴

Public Games in Old Norse Sagas

Children’s play finds its continuation in adults’ play, both in the past and in the present, even if there are, of course, gradual differences. In the medieval Icelandic sagas, for instance, we are constantly informed about games and drinking at the major festivals organized for the public, but we are not necessarily told what kind of games were played. In the *Laxdaela Saga* from ca. 1245, for instance, we read:

There were huge crowds at the assembly that year and there was a great deal of celebration, with drinking and games and every form of entertainment.¹¹⁵

111 Johann Heinrich Zedler, *Grosses vollstaendiges Universal-Lexicon Aller Wissenschaften und Kuenste*, vol. 38 (Leipzig and Halle: Zedler, 1743), 1624–29. He presents a well-balanced view of gambling games aimed at cheating the playing partners, mathematical games, entertaining games, and social games. In fact, Zedler lists quite a number of games and describes some of their features.

112 “Jeu,” *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*. Vol. 8. New facsimile ed. of the first edition from 1751–1780 (1765; Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1967), 531–43. There is no room here to evaluate the quality of this entry, but the sheer length of it within this encyclopedia demonstrates unmistakably that a. gaming was widespread and highly appreciated, b. that it was highly acknowledged as an important part of public and private life, and c. that the author/s were fully aware of the long history of game and play extending far back to antiquity. The danger of gambling, however, also stands out explicitly: “Tant de personnes de tout pays ont mis & mettent sans-cesse une partie considérable de leur bien à la merci des cartes & et des dés, sans en ignorer les mauvaises suites, qu’on ne peut s’empêcher de rechercher les causes d’un attrait si puissant” (532).

113 *Encyclopédie* (see note 112), vol. 12 (1765), 689–92.

114 *Encyclopédie* (see note 112), vol. 9 (1765), 680.

115 *Laxdaela Saga*, trans. with an intro. by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson (London: Penguin, 1969), 64.

In the *Egil's Saga*, also from the thirteenth century, we are informed, for instance:

Skallagrim took a great delight in trials of strength and games, and liked talking about them. Ball games were common in those days, and there were plenty of strong men in the district at this time.¹¹⁶

And when the men are not feasting, playing games, or watching horse fighting, they exercise in a variety of athletic activities, as we hear, for example, in the contemporary *Njál's Saga* about Gunnar Hamundarson:

He shot with a bow better than anyone else, and he always hit what he aimed at. He could jump higher than his own height, in full fighting gear, and just as far backward as forward. He swam like a seal, and there was no sport in which there was any point in competing with him and it was said that no man was his match.¹¹⁷

However, we are hardly informed about women's activities during their free time, though we can be certain that they enjoyed watching those competitions organized by the men. We witness them in their roles as wives, as heads of the family, as mothers, as workers on the farm, as travelers, etc., but they are granted virtually no attention by the Saga poets when it concerns pleasure and leisure.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, the Icelandic corpus of textual evidence confirms that pleasure and leisure mattered significantly in that society as well.

Gaming and Leisure Activities in Historical Terms

To complete the circle of our examination of this large topic, let us revisit briefly what we have understood so far and how we could proceed from here. We would be well advised to study toys and games as mirrors of the culturally determined life cycle, as we know only too well even today because every child needs toys adequate for its development.¹¹⁹ At the same time, it deserves mention that

116 *Egil's Saga*, trans. Bernard Scudder, ed. with an intro. and notes by Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (London: Penguin, 1997), 67.

117 *Njál's Saga*, trans. with intro. and notes by Robert Cook. *World of the Sagas* (London: Penguin, 1997), 35; see also 44. As to the game of 'horse fighting,' see the contribution to this volume by Carlee Arnett.

118 Jenny Jochens, *Women in Old Norse Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

119 Annemarieke Willemsen, "The Age of Play: Children's Toys and the Medieval Life Cycle," *Ludica: Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco* (Rome: Viella, 1995), 169–82; Sándor Petényi,

adults enjoy playing games just as much as children, though the toys, or cards and dice differ to some extent from those given to the young players, such as the top.¹²⁰ Life does not simply consist of work; there is always a certain element of leisure, which is being filled with pleasure. Even medieval society demonstrated a clear awareness of the necessities to work physically to earn one's bread, even if the nobility operated mostly in a different framework due to its social and military obligations.¹²¹

All cultures throughout the world are determined by those conditions, though differences arise from period to period, due to changing constellations and values, especially when religion enters the picture and imposes strict rules of behavior, such as during the Protestant Reformation, when the practice of gambling was also banned as an illegal activity.¹²² Nevertheless, even the most conservative societies allow their children to play, and grant the adults some time of relaxation, whether we think of – no insults or wrong categorization intended (the following list is only a random selection of general denominations) – Old Catholics, Greek Orthodox, the Mormons, fundamental Orthodox Jews and Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, and so forth, that is, throughout time and all over the world. Every game and every gamer represents a mirror of society at large and of the dominant culture.

Games and Toys in Medieval and Early Modern Hungary. Medium aevum quotidianum: Sonderband, 3 (Krems: Medium Aevum Quotidianum, 1994).

120 Antonia Fraser, *A History of Toys* ([New York]: Delacorte Press, 1966); Angela Schofield, *Toys in History*. Eyewitness Books (Hove, Brighton, UK: Wayland, 1978); D. W. Gould, *The Top: Universal Toy, Enduring Pastime* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter; distributed by Crown Publishers, 1973); Sándor Petényi, *Games and Toys in Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*. Medium Aevum Quotidianum, Sonderband III (Krems: Medium Aevum Quotidianum, 1994); Deborah Jaffe, *The History of Toys: From Spinning Tops to Robots* (Stroud: Sutton, 2006); Henryk Paner, "Infancy and Adolescence, Education and Recreation," *Lübecker Colloquium zur Stadtarchäologie im Hanseraum*. Vol. 8: *Kindheit und Jugend, Ausbildung und Freizeit* (Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild, 2012), 321–34.

121 Gregory M. Sadlek, *Idleness Working: The Discourse of Love's Labor from Ovid Through Chaucer and Gower* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010).

122 Ingrid Seppel, "Kurzweil getrieben ...: Bürgerliche Freizeitgestaltung im 16. Jahrhundert nach den Aufzeichnungen des Hermann Weinsberg," *Volkskultur am Rhein und Maas* 22 (2004): 21–32; *Augsburg During the Reformation Era: An Anthology of Sources*, ed. and trans. B. Ann Tlusty (Indianapolis, IN, and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2012), 160–84.

Hunting for Pleasure

Playfulness and fun make life entertaining and worth living, which quickly emerges as a timeless, fundamental aspect of all cultural history, even though we have often not paid enough attention to this phenomenon, thus simply ignoring critical issues that ought to be considered all the time in order to do justice to the complexities of people's existence both in the past and the present. In the world of medieval courts, that is, for all pre-modern aristocracy, hunting proved to be a major pastime,¹²³ and there is hardly any courtly romance or short verse narrative where this sport is not mentioned at least once, whether in Marie de France's *Guigemar* (ca. 1200), in Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan* (ca. 1210), or in the various *Melusine* narratives (e.g., Jean d'Arras, 1393; Couldrette, 1400; Thüring von Ringoltingen, 1456).¹²⁴ King Arthur regularly goes hunting and thereby experiences miraculous adventures, such as in Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*.¹²⁵ Hunting quickly turned into a sport, an athletic and an artistic activity involving many skills and splendid public displays, especially because it soon bloomed into a full-blown spectacle of major proportions involving the entire court society, both as actors and as spectators. Hugo of St. Victor, in his *Didascalicon de studio legendi* (ca. 1128), even counted the hunt as a form of philosophy, that is, as a part of the mechanical arts, next to the arts of acting, sea faring, and medical skills. Sophisticated hunters needed to understand both the wild animals as prey, their living conditions, and the environment they live in, and they had to develop very elaborate hunting techniques, weapons, and organizational strategies to achieve their goal, as reflected by numerous hunting regi-

123 John Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); Paolo Galloni, *Il cervo e il lupo: caccia e cultura nobiliare nel Medioevo*. Quadrante, 60 (Rome: Laterza, 1993); see also the contributions to *Jagd und höfische Kultur im Mittelalter*, ed. Werner Rösener (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997); cf. also Baudouin van den Abeele, *La littérature cynégétique*. Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, 75 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996); Martina Giese, "Graue Theorie und grünes Weidwerk? Die mittelalterliche Jagd zwischen Buchwissen und Praxis," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 89 (2007): 19–59.

124 Monika Schausten, "'dā hovel ir iuch selben mite': höfische Jagdkunst im Spiegel klerikaler Kritik am Beispiel des 'Tristan' Gottfrieds von Straßburg," *Semantik der Kulturkritik*, ed. Niels Werber. Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik, 161/41 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2011), 139–63; Sharon Kinoshita and Peggy McCracken, *Marie de France: A Critical Companion*. Gallica, 24 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2014), 119–22.

125 Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, ed. Janet Cowen (see note 97), vol. 1, 125 (Book IV, ch. 6). The pursuit of the hart is a common motif, such as in Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain* (ca. 1160) or Hartmann von Aue's *Iwein* (ca. 1190/1200), each time drawing the protagonist/s into a new marvelous world of bliss or sorrow.

mens, all of which strongly contributed to the development and realization of the ideal of *curialitas*, a most elaborate system of public entertainment.¹²⁶ As Burckhardt Krause emphasizes, the hunt required “ein differenziert ausgebildetes mimetisches Können ... und ein beträchtliches körperliches Leistungsvermögen sowie große Körperdisziplin. ...” (a mimetic ability, with many differentiating skills, considerable physical abilities, and a great bodily self-discipline).¹²⁷

Despite some differences in hunting techniques and hunted animals selected according to the hunter's gender, women were equally involved in this pastime, both as spectators and as participants.¹²⁸ As the fourteenth-century didactic poet Hadamar von Laber (ca. 1300–after 1354) illustrated in his courtly love allegory *Jagd*, every dog involved in the hunt could represent an aspect of the pursuit of love, such as the lover's heart, his psychological and moral qualities, his behavior, and even the lady's favors. Each dog carries the specific name mirroring the aspect dealt with, such as ‘heart’ and ‘patient endurance.’¹²⁹

Hunting is both an exercise and a physical challenge, it provides entertainment and also food, and the best hunters are those who know how to catch any animal just as they wish, such as Siegfried in the *Nibelungenlied* (ca 1200) or as Bertilak de Hautdesert in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (ca. 1370/1380). Many medieval secular frescoes and manuscript illustrations display hunting scenes, such as in the famous *Book of Hours* by the Limbourg brothers, commissioned by the Duke de Berry, the *Très Riches Heures* from ca. 1412–1416 (calendar leaf for December).¹³⁰

126 Burckhardt Krause, *Die Jagd als Lebensform und höfisches ‘Spiel’: mit einer Interpretation des ‘bast’ in Gottfrieds von Straßburg Tristan*. Helfant Studien, S 12 (Stuttgart: helfant edition, 1996), 32–37. See also the excellent collection, *Jagd und höfische Kultur im Mittelalter*, ed. Werner Rösener. Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 135 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997).

127 Krause, *Die Jagd* (see note 126), 34. As to the role of experts employed by the court, including hunters, see Timo Reuvekamp-Felberg, “Experten und Expertenwissen am Fürstenhof des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts,” *Höfe und Experten: Relationen von Macht und Wissen in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Marian Füssel, Antje Kuhle, and Michael Stolz (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 19–38.

128 Katharina Fietze, *Im Gefolge Dianas: Frauen und höfische Jagd im Mittelalter (1200–1500)*. Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, 59 (Cologne, Vienna, and Weimar: Böhlau, 2005).

129 Christoph Huber, “Hadamar von Laber,” *Killy Literaturlexikon: Autoren und Werke des deutschsprachigen Kulturraumes*, ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann. 2nd, completely rev. ed. Vol 4 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 563. *Hadamars von Laber Jagd*, with intro. and commentary by Karl Stejskal (Vienna: Hölzer, 1880).

130 *The Limbourg Brothers: Nijmegen Masters at the French Court 1400–1416*, ed. Rob Dückers and Pieter Roelofs (Nijmegen: Ludion, 2005). For excellent copies of the images online, see

Most intriguingly, in the Middle English alliterative romance, hunting takes place both in the forest and at the edge of the forest (Bertilak), depending on the type of animal, and also in the bedroom (Bertilak's wife). Each time, however, the real target is Gawain whose character is mirrored in the three animals that his host captures each day, the deer (speed and dexterity), the boar (strength and fierceness), and the fox (cunning, smartness). At the same time, Bertilak's wife tries to seduce him with her physical attractiveness, but she basically fails because her guest maintains his honor and does not accept any of her explicit and implicit offers out of respect for his host, his sense of doom because of the impending decapitation by the Green Knight, and, of course, his realization that he could not possibly return the wife's sexual favor to her husband as part of their wager. In this regard, he outperforms the deer, the boar, and the fox by means of his rhetorical skills and his courtly manners, escaping all of the huntress's traps and snares. He accepts her kisses, to be sure, but those he can easily 'extend' to Bertilak. Only when the wife offers a life-saving belt, does Gawain fail since he keeps that belt and does not turn it over to his host.¹³¹ The latter, however, knows about this as well, and only nicks his neck with the axe as a punishment for his little lie. This then concludes the game which the Green Knight played with Gawain, King Arthur, and the Round Table, and both honor and mutual respect have been re-established.

Hunting could also substitute for love, such as in the case of Guigemar in Marie de France's eponymous *lai* (ca. 1190/1200) where the young man is grown up but does not know anything about love and does not care about the other gender. Hence, to pass his time, he goes hunting, during which, however, he is badly wounded by his own arrow that had bounced back from a doe that he had killed. The animal tells him, however, before it dies, that he would have to find help from a lady far away and experience love, his real wound, which subsequently happens, indeed. Hunting, in other words, proves to be the everyday

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tr%C3%A8s_Riches_Heures_du_Duc_de_Berry#Calendar_gallery (last accessed on July 4, 2018).

131 There are many good editions of the text; here I draw from *The Works of the Gawain Poet: Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. Ad Putter and Myra Stokes. Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 2014); see also *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight*, ed. Helen Cooper and Keith Harrison. Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); for further studies on the issue of hunting, see Marcelle Thiébaux, *The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974); Anne Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1993). For critical reflections on the relationship between hunter and the hunted prey, see Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press, 2013).

activity for members of the aristocracy and marks the passing of their time, but it is not simply entertainment to pass empty time; instead it creates the framework to make life-changing decisions.¹³²

In one important example, hunting even constitutes the entire scope of activities for the young protagonist Parzival in Wolfram von Eschenbach's eponymous romance from ca. 1205.¹³³ After Parzival's father Gahmuret has died in battle in exotic lands, his widow, Herzeloyde, after having delivered her son, withdraws into a sylvan solitude, Soltâne, where she hopes to raise her child, Parzival, all by herself. This promises to be a safe distance away from the world of knighthood, the cause of her personal suffering, as the narrator himself emphasizes (Book II, ch. 112, vv. 19–20). Herzeloyde orders all her people under greatest threat never to talk about the outside world in order to protect the child from the evils coming from the courts and manly activities (Book III, ch. 117, vv. 22–28). However, he quickly searches, once he has grown into a youth, for some form of entertainment, and naturally turns to hunting by means of self-made bows and javelins, killing many birds in the woods (Book III, ch. 118, vv. 4–6).¹³⁴

Parzival's innocence and naïveté are still very evident at that point since he cries over the loss of the sweet bird songs without understanding the causality of his actions. Once Herzeloyde has learned the reason for his childish grieving, she orders all birds to be killed until her son requests a stop to this 'murder,' which reflects his deep inner sense of virtues as inherited from his father (Book III, ch. 119, vv. 10–11). Apparently, since he does not undergo any serious or noteworthy educational training, and grows up entirely unsupervised, he dedicates all of his time to hunting or to roaming the forest, which means that he is, at that point, still outside of culture and will experience that only once he has left the forest and hence has abandoned his childish entertainment in favor of knightly pursuits.

132 *Lais: texte original en ancien français; manuscrit Harley 978 du British Museum*, ed. Nathalie Desrugilliers-Billard (Clermont-Ferrand: Éd. Paleo, 2007); for a most useful introductory study of many relevant aspects in Marie's works, see now Sharon Kinoshita and Peggy McCracken, *Marie de France* (see note 124).

133 Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival* (see note 82). For the major role of the forest as a place of refuge, see Albrecht Classen, *The Forest in Medieval German Literature: Ecocritical Readings from a Historical Perspective*. Ecocritical Theory and Practice (Lanham, Boulder, et al.: Lexington Books, 2015).

134 I have discussed this episode already at greater length in Albrecht Classen, *The Forest in Medieval German Literature* (see note 133).

Nevertheless, Parzival, at an already somewhat older stage in his young life, turns to hunting large prey and becomes a master in that art, not allowing any animal to escape his javelins. The narrator does not elaborate much further about the hunt in this section, but it is entirely clear how important this activity was both for entertainment and for food, of course. Moreover, Parzival's performance as a hunter, even when he resorts to his self-made weapons, underscores the nature of hunting as one of the quintessential activities for people in his social class. It appears as if he is learning this art by himself and easily gains mastery in it, whereas he has no teachers giving him training in music, dancing, singing, performing poetry, jousting, etc.

Similarly, in the final section of Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan* (ca. 1210), when the two lovers Tristan and Isolde have already retired to the love cave, a kind of utopia for them,¹³⁵ they find entertainment in hunting, though they have no need for food. Sometimes they listen to bird song, sometimes they play their own music, and sometimes they ride on their horses to hunt animals by means of crossbows: "si riten under stunden, / sô si des geluste" (17248–49; occasionally they took their horses, as it pleased them). As the poet clearly emphasizes, they have no need to secure nourishment and go hunting for sheer pleasure: "niuwan durch die kurzen zît" (17268; only to pass their time).¹³⁶

Their happiness is, however, contingent on the external circumstances, as virtually everything in life is, and the discovery by King Mark happens fast because he also enjoys hunting, especially because he feels lonely without his wife and his nephew, so he can, with the help of one of his hunters, come across the love cave despite its secretive nature. Love and hunting thus become intimately entangled, both being activities of leisure, and yet existential in their symbolic significance, intertwining life, honor, love, and death as the ultimate outcome of the dangerous game of the erotic exchanges within the context of the hunt.¹³⁷

135 Tomas Tomasek, *Die Utopie im "Tristan" Gotfrids von Straßburg*. Hermaea: Germanistische Forschungen, Neue Folge, 49 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1985).

136 Burkhard Krause, *Die Jagd als Lebensform* (see note 126), 130–88; see also Marcelle Thiébaux, *The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1974); Armand Strubel and Chantal de Saulnier, *La poétique de la chasse au Moyen Age. Perspectives Littéraires* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1994).

137 To avoid any possible misunderstanding here, I do not intend to rely on Denis de Rougemont's highly seductive interpretation of courtly love, which was predicated on concepts developed by Richard Wagner and then Friedrich Nietzsche. See now Albrecht Classen, "Denis de Rougemont: Erforscher des *Tristan*-Mythos und Begründer eines neuen Liebes- und Todes-Mythos," *tristan mythos maschine 20. jahrhundert ff*, ed. Robert Schoeller and Nathanael Busch (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, forthcoming).

Very early on, once young Tristan had arrived at Mark's court, he taught the hunters how to carry out their job in a more artistic fashion, which subsequently prompts the king to promote Tristan to his master hunter (3419). Here, however, in the love cave episode, the master hunter becomes the hunted himself, as is the case with the entire court company at a later stage, when King Mark goes hunting because he is deeply distressed over the loss of his wife and nephew despite his heavy charges against them. We are strongly reminded of the principle of any game, where there are rules and a game board that easily make the player into a winner or a loser, and while the lovers have had the upper hand, so to speak, for a long time, despite their love pangs and sorrow, now the tide has turned against them.

Mark's hunting company fails to track down an unusual deer, but then they reach the vicinity of the love cave and decide to set up their camp there. In the morning, with the help of one of his huntsmen, Mark personally discovers the love cave, and the sight of the two lovers separated by a sword causes him so much trouble in his mind that he breaks off his hunt and returns to the court (17620–25).¹³⁸ For Mark, his pleasure activities turn into pain and suffering affecting him deeply, while the two lovers enjoy hunting and playing music as part of their out-of-this-world erotic experience. Nevertheless, they also demonstrate great fear when they hear the sounds of the hunting party and prepare themselves for potential discovery. Once that has actually happened, with Mark being deceived once again, they are allowed to return to the court, where the game of love becomes much more difficult because the king scrutinizes them most diligently and so eventually catches them *in flagrante*, which forces Tristan to leave for good. Thus, that part of the game comes to an end (18177–18404), and the subsequent events turn into a bad game where the rules are unclear, confusing, and contradictory. Little wonder that Tristan therefore becomes confused and almost begins to betray his true love, Isolde.

In the Middle Ages and well into the seventeenth century, hunting also often involved the use of birds of prey, and was regarded as one of the highest forms of the art of hunting, requiring extensive training of the birds, as best illustrated by Emperor Frederick II's famous book of falconry, his *De arte venandi cum avibus*,

138 Here I will quote from Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan: Text und kritischer Apparat*, ed. Karl Marold. Unveränderter vierter Abdruck nach dem dritten mit einem auf Grund von F. Rankes Kollationen verbesserten Apparat besorgt von Werner Schröder (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1977); see also Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan und Isolde*, ed. Walter Haug and Manfred Günter Scholz. 2 vols. Bibliothek des Mittelalters, 10 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2011); which is especially useful for the commentary in vol. 2.

from the 1240s.¹³⁹ Although he derived much inspiration from Aristotle's *De Liber animalum* in the Latin translation by Michael Scot, Frederick relied mostly on his own experiments and observations and made greatest efforts to learn as much as possible about the nature of falcons and related birds of prey in order to perfect his own skills and that of his courtiers in the art of hunting with those birds.¹⁴⁰ One of the most famous, and oldest courtly stanzas in Middle High German (*Minnesang*) by Der von Kürenberg (ca. 1160), contains explicit references to hunting with falcons as a metaphor of love, entailing the primary need to tame the young falcon at first, that is, the beloved lady. Love, life, and game thus intertwine with each other in a highly sophisticated manner.¹⁴¹ Tristan, in Gottfried's romance,

139 *Von der Kunst mit Vögeln zu jagen: das Falkenbuch Friedrichs II.: Kulturgeschichte und Ornithologie; Begleitband zur Sonderausstellung "Kaiser Friedrich II. (1194–1250). Welt und Kultur des Mittelmeerraums" im Landesmuseum für Natur und Mensch Oldenburg*, ed. Mamoun Fansa and Carsten Ritzau. Schriftenreihe des Landesmuseums Natur und Mensch / Landesmuseum für Natur und Mensch, 56 (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2008). See now the contributions to this volume by William Mahan and Maria Raid.

140 See already Charles H. Haskins, "'De Arte Venandi cum Avibus' of the Emperor Frederick II," *The English Historical Review* 36.143 (Jul., 1921): 334–55; id., "The Latin Literature of Sport," *Speculum* 2.3 (Jul., 1927): 235–52; for an online text edition (1942), see <https://www.scribd.com/doc/20486846/De-Arte-Venandi-Cum-Avibus-1> (last accessed on June 22, 2018); for an English translation, see Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, *The Art of Falconry Being the De arte venandi cum avibus*, trans. and ed. Casey A. Wood and F. Marjorie Fyfe (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1961). This famous treatise has been discussed numerous times both in print and in digital form.

141 Ulrich Müller, "Krisen, Gewalt und Kriege der Liebe in der mittelhochdeutschen Literatur," *Krisen, Kriege, Katastrophen: Zum Umgang mit Angst und Bedrohung im Mittelalter*, ed. Christian Rohr, Ursula Bieber, and Katharina Zeppezauer-Wachauer. Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zu Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit, 3 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2018), 293–314; here 295–97. Cf. also the contribution to this volume by William Mahan. Beate Kellner, *Spiel der Liebe im Minnesang* (see note 104), identifies the love songs in Middle High German courtly literature (*Minnesang*) as a medium for social games at court, at least in metaphorical terms, with the poet competing against each other (251). This might help us fundamentally in analyzing courtly love poetry at large, which was not simply an artistic enterprise, but a strategy to get every member of the court involved and engaged through the discourse on love. No good game without challenges! However, Kellner does not argue specifically (or does not even intend to do so, despite the key word in the book title), as I and all the contributors to this volume do, that we ought to read the *Minnelieder* as a medium for courtly intellectual games; instead, she proposes to consider them as expressions of various types of poetic performances, that is, we should perceive them in their "medialen Konstitution und ihrer *Mouvance* und *Variance*" (28; medial constitution and their *mouvance* and *variance*). She also suggests that these *minne* songs should be regarded as a poetic expression of courtly imagination ("inszenierte[] Imaginationen," 299), a staged fantasy that, on the other hand, cannot yield true understanding of the feelings in the heart of the other person (497). When Kellner examines the poems by Walther von der Vogel-

likewise demonstrates his extensive skills in falconry, which becomes, apart from his interest in playing chess, a major reason why the Norwegian merchants kidnap him in order to sell this astonishing individual for a high price. Not everyone joining a game can count on winning, which is representative of life, and so also in the case of Tristan.

After the display of valuable birds of prey has attracted Tristan and his playmates, along with their tutor, to enter the ship, the protagonist discovers a chess board and is immediately so enthralled in that game that he does not notice what impression he is making on his environment, unless we would have to read his performance as a deliberate strategy to shine in public with all of his skills. Specifically, however, the narrator only informs us that he is so engaged in playing chess, while performing some music and acting out his own game to everyone's delight, that the merchants can secretly lift the anchor and sail away with him. This specific entertainment thus surreptitiously constitutes a major catapult for Tristan, suddenly moving him out of his old world and forcing him to explore, at first against his own will, of course, the new territory of his uncle, King Mark of Cornwall.

God obviously loves this game player, as we would say, because a major thunderstorm threatens the ship with the merchants, so they decide to drop the young man off at a forlorn coast, which, indeed, calms down the storm and saves all their lives, which strongly evokes biblical images. Significantly for our topic, gaming continues to dominate Tristan's life also at Mark's court, where he bedazzles everyone with his abilities as a huntsman, as a musician, as a polyglot, and also as a player of chess. Little wonder that this triggers one catastrophe after the other in his life, but he always reaches a higher level subsequently, and can thus carry, so to speak, his gaming skills (chess, hunting, jousting, etc.) also to Ireland where he encounters his future love. There, however, his games take him to another, much more difficult level be-

weide, however, she is willing to concede that here a real form of intellectual game is performed: "Dabei werden die Damen ... letztendlich von den Sängern wie Spielfiguren geführt und zum Einsatz gebracht" (251; Ultimately, the ladies are moved around and utilized, at least by the singers, like figures on a board). Apparently, for her, the concept of 'game' remains an abstract metaphor (257), which does not fully imply, as I have suggested throughout this study, the experimental exploration of courtly love for education and stimulation, hence for the constitution of courtly culture at large. Instead, Kellner observes in the *Minnesang* a medium for self-reflection and the search for the fulfillment of erotic and spiritual ideals (498, 503–04). For her, 'game' thus boils down to 'fictionality' and the act of composing and performing poetry (ibid.). That is, of course, a perfectly valid approach, but moves us into a different, much more abstract direction compared to the one pursued here. For a contrastive view, in line with my own perspective, see also the contribution to this volume by Fidel Fajardo-Acosta.

cause they then involve the princess Isolde, whom Tristan wins for his uncle as his wife, while he himself will accidentally drink the metaphorical love potion together with her when they travel from Ireland to Cornwall. From that time on, these two protagonists realize increasingly that they lose the control over the game of their lives and become victims of the power of love which they cannot control.

While Tristan was a *magister ludi* at the beginning of the romance, at the end he realizes that he has turned into a pawn on the metaphorical game board of the play of love itself.¹⁴² After all, the two lovers are first discovered by Tristan's friend, Marjôdo, who traces Tristan's footsteps and reaches the place where they are hiding, with the door simply blocked by a large chess board.¹⁴³ Being exhausted from their playing, obviously the real game of chess and the play of love as well, Tristan and Isolde are asleep and thus have let their guards down and consequently lose their own game in political terms because they have been discovered and exposed. From that time on, Marjôdo, jealous of Tristan's fortune of enjoying Isolde's love, whom he longs for himself, pursues them with all of his hatred and tries to destroy them. In short, the rules of the game have changed for the lovers; once having been the hunters of their own happiness, they now turn into the object of the hunt by the members of the

142 Christine Casson-Szabad, *Spiel der Welten: Fiktionalität als narratives Paradigma in Mittelalter und Postmoderne: von Gottfrieds "Tristan" bis Peter Handke*. Erlanger Studien, 134 (Erlangen and Jean: Palm und Enke, 2004); Franziska Hammer, "Das Spiel mit dem Irrweg: poetologische Strategien in Gottfrieds Tristan," *Irrwege: zu Ästhetik und Hermeneutik des Fehlgehens*, ed. Matthias Däumer. Studien zur historischen Poetik, 5 (Heidelberg: Winter, 2010), 305–20. For the notion of game as a metaphor of life in late medieval literature, see Albrecht Classen, "Erotik und Sexualität im Märe des Spätmittelalters: Sprachwitz, Intelligenz, Spiel und sexuelle Erfüllung," *Eros und Logos: Literarische Formen des sinnlichen Begehrens in der (deutschsprachigen) Literatur vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Albrecht Classen, Wolfgang Brylla, and Andrey Kotin. Popular Fiction Studies, 4 (Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2018), 47–69. As to the concept of the "magister ludi," both in the Middle Ages and today, see note 25 above.

143 Albrecht Classen, "Chess in Medieval German Literature: A Mirror of Social-Historical and Cultural, Religious, Ethical, and Moral Conditions," *Chess in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: A Fundamental Thought Paradigm of the Premodern World*, ed. Daniel E. O'Sullivan. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 10 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 17–44. See also Jenny Adams, *Power Play: The Literature and Politics of Chess in the Late Middle Ages*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Michael Schwarzbach-Dobson, *Exemplarisches Erzählen im Kontext: Mittelalterliche Fabeln, Gleichnisse und historische Exemple in narrativer Argumentation*. Literatur – Theorie – Geschichte (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 131–45.

court and the king himself, very similar to the situation in the much later *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (late fourteenth century).¹⁴⁴

We could also take into consideration the famous story told by Boccaccio in his *Decameron* (ca. 1349–ca. 1351) about Federigo degli Alberighi and his love, Madonna Giovanna (day 5, story 9), which takes place in Florence and the nearby countryside. She does not respond to any of his wooing, although he wastes all of his money in her service; eventually he has to leave the city and retire to a very simple farm, entirely impoverished, except for a most splendid falcon, which he regards as his most precious possession. When Giovanna's husband passes away, she also retires to the countryside, and thus her son strikes a friendship with Federigo, whose falcon he deeply admires and would love to receive as a gift. Almost like in a case of love-sickness, he falls badly ill and admits to his mother that getting that falcon would recover his spirit, hence his health. She naturally feels very uncomfortable to request that falcon from Federigo, considering his long and unsuccessful wooing and her own harsh behavior toward him. However, for her son's sake, she finally overcomes her hesitation and goes to visit Federigo. Unfortunately, instead of asking him directly for the falcon, she requests that he prepare a meal for her and her companion, which would be a gesture on her own part to repay him for all of his failed efforts, gracing him with her presence at his dinner table.

Federigo, overjoyed, immediately agrees, but he is so poor at that point that he has nothing in the house to make a meal with, except for the falcon. Although this bird of prey is his greatest treasure, he does not hesitate a second to kill it and to have it prepared for their culinary enjoyment. Only after the dinner, the lady reveals what her real intention had been, to ask for the very falcon she just has eaten, as a gift for her son. Tragically, soon after her son dies, and then the mother's brothers strongly urge her to remarry. In that moment it dawns upon her how much Federigo has really demonstrated his noble character, especially when he sacrificed his last treasure to honor his beloved lady, so she finally changes her mind and marries him, which thus concludes the story with a happy end.

While the falcon itself does not emerge as an active participant in this account, it proves to be, as many scholars have already recognized, the central motif of this story. Both Federigo and Giovanna's son, very similar to Tristan, are passionate about the sport of hunting with falcons and other birds of prey,

¹⁴⁴ See now the contributions to *Homo ludens, homo loquens: El juego y la palabra en la Edad Media / Homo ludens, homo loquens: Le jeu et la parole au Moyen Âge*, ed. María Pilar Suárez Pascual. Colección de estudios, 161 (Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2014).

and this falcon itself, hence hunting with this kind of bird, is identified as a most honorable symbol of courtly culture and courtly entertainment.¹⁴⁵ By ingesting the bird, parallel to the highly popular motif of the ‘eaten heart,’ the lady has unintentionally accepted the lure and thus finds herself bonded to Federigo as the most worthy man to marry. Federigo, in turn, by giving up the central icon of his pleasure and leisure activities, finally gains the heart of the lady he has wooed for such a long time. Both characters have to realize that the rules of their games have shifted as they find themselves on a new game board with switched roles, so to speak, once Federigo is reduced in terms of material possessions to the falcon and has nothing else left to offer her for dinner. Game, love, and life are here intriguingly interlaced with each other, and because Federigo commits virtually everything he owns to winning his lady’s love, he ultimately gains the highest prize, her heart. We could also argue that the male protagonist at the end turns away from his private game with the falcon to a game involving his lady, and both together can thus achieve the true goal in life, happiness together in marriage.¹⁴⁶

Modern authors of short stories, or novellas, such as the German writers Paul Heyse (1830–1914) and Werner Bergengruen (1892–1964), explicitly drew from Boccaccio’s literary creation to develop their own theory addressing the very nature of this genre, the novella. Whether they also would have accepted the ludic element in the employment of this motif with the falcon, cannot be determined here.¹⁴⁷

145 I will engage with Boccaccio’s *Decameron* more in detail below; for a text edition and an English translation, see note 227. For the universality of this motif with the falcon, see now the contributions to *Raptor and Human: Falconry and Bird Symbolism Throughout the Millennia on a Global Scale*, ed. Karl-Heinz Gersmann and Oliver Grimm. Advanced Studies on the Archaeology and History of Hunting, 1.1 (Kiel and Hamburg: Wachholtz, 2018).

146 See, for instance, Dario Del Puppo and Musumeci, Salvatore, “Predators of the Heart: Nobility, Eroticism, and Changing Food Practices in the Tale of Federigo degli Alberighi (Decameron V.9),” *Table Talk: Perspectives on Food in Medieval Italian Literature*, ed. Christiana Purdy Moudares (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2010), 73–84; Maria Pia Ellero, “Le leggi d’amore: A proposito di Decameron, V 9,” *Strumenti critici* 28.3 (133) (2013): 363–83.

147 Wilhelm Pötters, *Begriff und Struktur der Novelle: linguistische Betrachtungen zu Boccaccios “Falken”*. Konzepte der Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft, 49 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1991); Sascha Kiefer, *Die deutsche Novelle im 20. Jahrhundert: eine Gattungsgeschichte* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2010). The issue here is not on pleasure or leisure, but on the literary category of the novella.

Categories of Games

According to Helmut Birkhan, drawing both from Huizinga and Caillois, all games can be subsumed under the following categories: 1. they are carried out voluntarily; 2. they take place within specific limits of time and space; 3. all gamers enjoy the same chances; 4. they observe specific rules and regulations which all players accept voluntarily; 5. there is no guarantee of victory or triumph because without chance there would not be a point to play a game; 6. the game has only an intrinsic value, as much as it might mirror the real world; 7. the game is determined by joy and happiness, tension and excitement; 8. the game is a lived experience by itself; and 9. many games include a community of people, though there are also games that can be played alone.¹⁴⁸

The game of chess, for instance, has always played a major role in many different societies from ancient times until today. It requires intelligence, wit, and strategic planning, and has hence always been appreciated as a game appropriate for the intellectuals, and the higher ranks of aristocracy. However, even more important, chess represents a game that allows the players to mimic real life and to train themselves for the exigencies of reality, so it has always been regarded as a noble game, allowing the king or the queen, a knight or a noble lady to practice what their social roles were like, at least in theoretical terms.¹⁴⁹ Chess appears in the visual arts, in literary texts, and in the historical accounts; fictional figures such as Tristan in Gottfried von Straßburg's eponymous romance play chess and lose sight of reality around them, although the game itself quickly proves to be an anticipation of future events in real life.

The move on the board represents a move in one's life's direction, although neither the narrator nor the protagonist seem to be fully aware of this metaphorical dimension. Gottfried only states that the young man, once he has noticed the exquisite chess board on the ship of the Norwegian merchants, cannot resist the temptation to play an exciting and challenging game in which he gets completely absorbed. However, he also sings songs in brief intervals, voices technical terms for chess board moves in exotic languages, and thereby dazzles the merchants so much – they are obviously also experts in playing chess, though not at the same

¹⁴⁸ Birkhan, *Spielendes Mittelalter* (see note 10), 27–28.

¹⁴⁹ Albrecht Classen, "Chess in Medieval German Literature: A Mirror of Social-Historical and Cultural, Religious, Ethical, and Moral Conditions," *Chess in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: A Fundamental Thought Paradigm of the Premodern World*, ed. Daniel E. O'Sullivan. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 10 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 17–44. See also the introduction and the other contributions to that volume.

level as Tristan – that they decide to kidnap him and to sell him into slavery.¹⁵⁰ This sophisticated game brings about Tristan's separation from his foster family and ultimately takes him to Cornwall, to his uncle Marke. While Tristan is the winner in the chess game – how else could it be? – he is the loser in the game of life at that point, and yet will ultimately win the metaphorical queen of his heart, the Irish princess Isolde. There is a direct correlation between his playing chess and his further development as an individual.

Tristan research has discovered already a long time ago that the poet himself enjoyed intellectual games, as demonstrated through his intricate use of meaningful initials in the early part that, read together, form the acrostics of the two protagonists Tristan and Isolde and the name of a patron, Dieterich, and form part of a sentence directed at the audience, stating that Gottfried is giving the “estoire” of Isolde and Tristan to the readers. Only those who had access to the actual manuscript could fully understand this game by the poet, but a game it was, for sure.¹⁵¹

Play and Leisure in Cultural Terms

Pleasure and leisure also entail the ordinary entertainment during a tournament, a court assembly, a church council, a political meeting, an urban meeting, and many other social gatherings. There is always free time, especially in societies with sufficient resources, and people regularly feel the need to fill it with gambling, playing, participating in tournaments, listening to music, or the oral presentation of lays, romances, or heroic epics. As in modern times, pre-modern people faced the huge challenge of keeping busy especially at times when they were not required to work, to fight, to pray, to eat, or to do some other essential task. Leisure time sounds like a wonderful opportunity, but it is only so when and if it can be utilized, meaningfully or not, to achieve a certain goal, be it

150 Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan*. With the surviving fragments of the *Tristran* of Thomas. With an intro. by A. T. Hatto (1960; London: Penguin, 1967), 71–72. Cf. the contributions to *A Companion to Gottfried von Strassburg's "Tristan"*, ed. Will Hasty. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003); and Tomas Tomasek, *Gottfried von Straßburg* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 2007)

151 Louis Gravigny, “Le jeu d’initiales de *Tristan* de Gottfried de Strasbourg,” *Études Germaniques* 64.3 (2009): 673–89; see also her *Das Initialenspiel des Tristan Gottfrieds von Strassburg* (Bordeaux: self print, 20017). I thank the author for sharing these with me. See also Tomas Tomasek, *Gottfried von Straßburg* (see note 150), 90–94, who summarizes the relevant research on this topic and clearly distinguishes between an orally oriented and a reading oriented audience of this famous romance.

winning a game, gaining respect for one's physical prowess, or intellectual and artistic abilities. Without competition hardly any game is worth calling it that; so only if individuals engage in mutual challenges do they feel fulfilled. Children's play is not what the term implies, playful, meaningless, or a waste of time. We can learn much about the basic values and ideals of a society by studying how people viewed pleasures and leisure and their means to achieve entertainment both publicly and privately.

James S. Hans has offered the following, highly useful definition of play as a social activity:

I want to suggest a definition of play that points to an activity that points to the fundamental activity of man, the back-and-forth movement of encounter and exchange with the world in which man is continually engaged. But if play is an activity, it is not merely a random participation in the process of the world and is not a substitute for the word "process" or the word "flux." It is a structuring activity, the activity out of which understanding comes. Play is at one and the same time the location where we question our structures of understanding and the location where we develop them. ... Play is also a concept that joins two other important words in our lexicon: desire and production. ... Play, production, and desire come together insofar as play always involves and is always a part of production and desire. The relationship these words share is global in scope, affecting not only all of what we call "culture," but also all of what we call "nature." ... For this reason, play is important on an individual level because it is an activity in which we all participate. ... Only when we begin to perceive how play affects our lives at both levels will we properly understand the place of our own activity and its function in both the human and the natural world.¹⁵²

Certainly, the institution of the tournament was enjoyed throughout the entire Middle Ages and well beyond, increasingly being copied by members of the urban elite. But it was not simply a training camp for the future knights, or sword-wielding citizens; it also allowed the individual to learn about the wide range of skills handling the horse, the weapons, how to equip oneself with armor, and how to operate in the field. This also applies to modern sport, whether we think of soccer, tennis, baseball, or football. The individual player operates as a representative of society at large and acts both on his/her own in private terms. However, most forms of entertainment involve group activities, so game and play commonly transgress the boundary between private and public.

Some modern cultural anthropologists have maintained that one of the key problems of our modern world rests in the loss of pleasure and leisure, in the rise of all-dominating rationality, and the disappearance of gaming activities that

¹⁵² James S. Hans, *The Play of the World* (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), x–xi.

could alleviate the boredom, meaninglessness, and alienation of people today. Norbert Bolz, for instance, claims:

In einem sich über Jahrhunderte erstreckenden Zivilisationsprozess haben Aufklärung und Wissenschaft die Welt entzaubert. Und wir ertragen es nur, in dieser entzauberten Welt zu leben, weil es Unterhaltung gibt. Politische Sicherheit, technischer Fortschritt und wirtschaftlicher Wohlstand haben die Welt langweilig gemacht. Und wir ertragen es nur, in dieser langweiligen Welt zu leben, weil es Unterhaltung gibt. Entertainment ist also die große Kompensation, die uns das Leben lebenswert macht. Und im Zentrum der Unterhaltung steht das Spiel.¹⁵³

[During a civilizing process that extended over a century, both enlightenment and the sciences have disenchanting the world. We, however, can only tolerate living in this disenchanted world because there is entertainment. Political security, technical progress, and economic comfort have made the world boring. And we can stand to live in this boring world only because there is entertainment. Hence, entertainment is the great compensation that makes our life worth living. The center of entertainment there is the game.]

However, when he claims that the nineteenth century was a time of production, that the twentieth century was a time of consumption, and that the twenty-first century will be a time of playful creativity, he disregards the pre-modern world, and yet, then returns to it rather hastily, drawing heavily, perhaps a bit excessively, from the teachings by Max Weber:

153 Norbert Bolz, *Wer nicht spielt, ist krank: Warum Fußball, Glücksspiel und Social Games lebenswichtig für uns sind* (Munich: Redline Verlag, 2014), 6–7; see also online at: <https://www.m-vg.de/mediafiles/article/pdfdemo/978-3-86881-571-9.pdf> (last accessed on May 15, 2018); Wolfgang Schluchter, *Die Entzauberung der Welt: sechs Studien zu Max Weber* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); Hartmut Lehmann, *Die Entzauberung der Welt: Studien zu Themen von Max Weber. Bausteine zu einer europäischen Religionsgeschichte im Zeitalter der Säkularisierung*, 11 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009). See also Allison P. Coudert, “Rethinking Max Weber’s Theory of Disenchantment,” *Magic and Magicians in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Time: The Occult in Pre-Modern Sciences, Medicine, Literature, Religion, and Astrology*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 20 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 705–39. She basically agrees with Bolz without mentioning him because she does not engage with the notion of game, as he does, while both scholars endeavor to carry out a philosophical and cultural-anthropological analysis of the rise of the modern world and its dangerous downfall. The criteria of pleasure and leisure matter significantly in this context. For Coudert, Weber’s concept of the disenchantment of the world is based on false premises and cannot be confirmed in light of massive evidence drawn from the entire movement of Romanticism, for instance.

Den Zangenangriff von Reformation und Kapitalismus konnte die adlige Spielform des Lebens nicht überstehen. Den lustfeindlichen Puritanern verdankt unser Kapitalismus ja seinen "Geist."¹⁵⁴

[The aristocratic playful form of life could not resist the double attack by the Reformation and capitalism. Our capitalism derives its 'spirit' from the Puritans who were opposed to the experience of lust/joy].

Although Bolz relies on a rather polemic approach, driven by his strong sense that our world today needs to be reformed in a quite radical fashion, his basic ideas deserve to be considered further in our reflections on the notion of pleasure and leisure in the pre-modern world. But I need to hasten to include a critical remark because it would be erroneous to assume that the modern generation would no longer play; on the contrary, as the huge popularity of video and computer games, but then also card games (*Magic the Gathering*, for instance), indicates,¹⁵⁵ Bolz notes, for instance:

Jedes Spiel weckt die reinen, starken Gefühle, die wir in der modernen Gesellschaft nicht mehr ausleben können. Die große Erregung hat es heute gleich mit zwei mächtigen Feinden zu tun. Da ist, erstens, die Kulturtechnik der Selbstkontrolle, die das Alltagsleben rationalisiert und gerade in der Quantified-Self-Bewegung einen gespenstischen Extremwert erreicht. In Massendemokratien gibt es kein Handeln mehr, sondern nur noch Verhalten.¹⁵⁶

[Every game awakens pure and strong feelings that we can no longer live out in the modern society. The great excitement faces today even two powerful enemies. First, there is the cultural technology of self-control which rationalizes the everyday life and has reached in the 'quantified-self-movement' a ghostly apogee. In mass democracies there are no longer any actions possible; there is only a behavior left.]

But what constitutes or makes up any game, and what defines the playfulness in human nature? Both Jan Huizinga and Roger Caillois have provided us with fundamental theoretical reflections that deserve to be reviewed briefly for the purpose of this introduction.

154 Bolz, *Wer nicht spielt, ist krank* (see note 153), 9. The many attempts to impose bans on gambling, late-night carousing, sword-fighting and fencing, shooting for entertainment, mummery, and other forms of pleasures during the sixteenth century actually speak a different language; see the sources in *Augsburg During the Reformation Era*, ed. and trans. B. Ann Tlusty (see note 122). As to tavern comportment, Tlusty notes, 172: "Records of fines collected for fighting in Augsburg during the late sixteenth century record around a thousand fights per year, 80 percent of them involving only men and about 10 percent of those with blades, mostly swords." See also the contribution to this volume by Scott L. Taylor.

155 See the contribution to this volume by Kevin and Brent Moberly.

156 Bolz, *Wer nicht spielt, ist krank* (see note 153), 10.

Huizinga's Concept of Play

Huizinga, above all, examined play through a variety of lenses, especially language, law, war, poetry, philosophy, and the arts, but then he also considered play in its particular function to contribute to the formation and establishment of culture.¹⁵⁷ Following I will offer a running commentary of some of his key points.

As Huizinga underscores, play is to be regarded as a cultural phenomenon (1) because of its fundamental fun element that all people need in order to achieve a certain degree of happiness.¹⁵⁸ However, play is not a phenomenon that can be fully grasped rationally; instead, it is “a thing on its own. ... Play cannot be denied. ... You can deny seriousness, but not play” (3). He implies hereby not only the concrete play, like in a child's play, but game, enjoyment, delight, and entertainment, which he all groups under the category of the “irrational” (4). In a sort of grandstanding, Huizinga even goes so far as to claim that all forms of human civilization, including law and order, commerce and profit, have their origin in play (5), but we can certainly agree with him that all play conveys a form of entertainment and fun, triggering laughter and bringing about excitement, whether over a knightly tournament or a game of chess. Pleasure is produced through the experience of individual freedom, though the game itself is still determined by another set of rules under which the players submit voluntarily (7–8).

Play and game take place within their own territory, not far away from reality, but certainly out of the ordinary, in a kind of free space (9), where endless repetitions are always a possibility, if not even a necessity (10), through which innumerable possibilities and options are experimented with without really hard-core consequences for the player (11). Every play represents an extraordinary situation, although it is also determined by specific rules (13) that make possible a representation of reality or the staging of a contest (13). The former can be

157 J(ohan) Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (1938; Boston: Roy Publishers, 1950/1955); cf. to this now Marcus Sandl, *Homo ludens: Überlegungen zur historischen Anthropologie des Spiels* (Constance: Bibliothek der Universität Konstanz, 2014).

158 See the strong arguments by Bolz about the boredom and meaninglessness of modern life, *Wer nicht spielt, ist krank* (see note 153). From a cultural-historical perspective, however, this quickly proves to be a rather fuzzy concept that would have to be thoroughly dissected and analyzed both with respect to the pre-modern and the post-modern world. In one respect, however, I would tend to agree with Bolz, considering the global rise in drug addiction which could be related to people's increasing inability to find meaning and joy in their lives. We need more play, as both Huizinga and Bolz would argue.

regularly found among ancient cultures and in religious communities throughout times that rely on rituals (liturgy) and create a performance to gain access to the numinosum (15). This, however, has significant parallels even with the most mundane child's play because a new world is created through either approach (18).

Play is a mirror of real life and yet also supersedes it through its experimental character (21). "Genuine play possesses ... at least one further very essential feature, namely the consciousness, however latent, of 'only pretending'" (22). In an extreme context, as Huizinga suggests, play and religion share many characteristics because in both dimensions the individual is allowed, or rather invited, to pursue an alternative existence (25).¹⁵⁹ This leads him to the observation that "seriousness seeks to exclude play, whereas play can very well include seriousness" (45). When playing, the individual competes with others for recognition, triumph, happiness, esteem, honor, and even enlightenment because of the new understanding of life by itself (50–53). The winner of a game feels superior to the other/s and regards the board or field of the triumph as his/her own territory where the rules have operated in his/her favor (62–63). All that might apply to practical conditions of play, but it does not seem to help us significantly in a more theoretical context, such as when courtly love and play would have to be considered together because of inherent contradictions that tend to emerge with the development of love within a courtly setting.

Nevertheless, quite profoundly, Huizinga posits that "[i]n play, therefore, the antithetical and agonistic basis of civilization is given from the start, for play is older and more original than civilization" (73). But once civilization has gained the upper hand, and playing has been relegated to the world of childhood, an essential component of human existence can also get lost, and with it creativity and individuality (75). With respect to the Middle Ages – why not to the Renaissance or the Baroque? – Huizinga assumed that "the influence of the play-spirit was extraordinarily great ... not on the inward structure of its institutions, which was largely classical in origin, but on the ceremonial with which that structure was expressed and embellished" (180).¹⁶⁰ Irrespective of any historical criteria,

159 See now the theoretical reflections by Eugene Fink, *Play as Symbol of the World and Other Writings*, trans. Ian Alexander Moore and Christopher Turner (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2016), 27; cf. also Fidel Fajardo-Acosta's contribution to this volume.

160 In fact, Huizinga quickly admits that play also was of great importance during the Renaissance and the age of Humanism (180–81). Turning to the Baroque, he observes the same element at play (182). Would it then not be better not to limit any concept of game to a specific cultural period and accept, as he does anyway, that play and civilization have always gone hand in hand?

he then concludes, for instance, that music “is the highest and purest expression of the *facultas ludendi*” (187). This could help us considerably within the context of the seven liberal arts, with music representing the highest art within the quadrivium, where the divine arrangement of this world by means of musical scores in the planetary and stellar orbits supersedes all other aspects in the physical cosmos. Yet, we should push the issue further and embrace a notion of ludic quality undergirding all cultural conditions since the individual players determining that culture are certainly at liberty to arrange their own vantage points and potential strategies, both at the medieval courts and in late medieval urban centers. The literary discourse, the musical and artistic manifestations, the performativity of public life, all underscored the notion of game as the principal function of society perceived as consisting of playing parties. Both pleasure and leisure thus prove to be powerful categories for our efforts to comprehend fundamental features of the pre-modern world.

Both Huizinga and, long after him, Bolz claimed that the ever growing impact of rules and regulations, such as in sport, have increasingly repressed the element of free play and replaced it with a highly bureaucratic, administrated activity that is finally far removed from the true need of humans, to play freely, to be creative, and thus to find themselves and their individuality (197). If we consider, however, either the knightly tournament or the game of chess, such quality differentiations between the Middle Ages, for instance, and the postmodern world do not make too much sense. Huizinga then concludes:

real civilization cannot exist in the absence of a certain play-element, for civilization presupposes limitation and mastery of the self, the ability not to confuse its own tendencies with the ultimate and highest goal, but to understand that it is enclosed within certain bounds freely accepted. Civilization will, in a sense, always be played according to certain rules, and true civilization will always demand fair play. (211)

Play as Viewed by Roger Caillois

Roger Caillois did not essentially deviate from Huizinga’s concept, but categorized game and play more specifically, concluding that “[g]ames of simulation lead to the arts of the spectacle, which express and reflect a culture.”¹⁶¹ From his perspective, we can and must perceive game cross-culturally and across time because the element of play constitutes an anthropological constant. Otherwise, for instance, the Persian game of backgammon or chess could not

¹⁶¹ Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games* (see note 99), 78.

have appealed so much to western Europeans in the Middle Ages or citizens of North America in the twenty-first century. In his words, “In fact, if games are cultural factors and images, it follows that to a certain degree a civilization and its content may be characterized by its games. They necessarily reflect its culture pattern and provide useful indications as to the preferences, weakness, and strength of a given society at a particular stage of its evolution.”¹⁶²

Insofar as game or play provide a form of free space, there is always a large dimension of creativity at work, and the individual is empowered to imagine his or her own world, yet still interacting with the surrounding reality and learning how to cope with it: “the further removed play is from reality, the greater is its educational value. For it does not teach facts, but rather develops aptitudes.”¹⁶³ Correspondingly, turning to the concrete historicity of gaming and play, there are forms of entertainment for children and for adults, for members of the high ranking class and for the poor, for men and women.¹⁶⁴

Caillois defines game, the specific manifestation of pleasure and leisure, as follows: It is free, or not obligatory; it is separate (from the routine of life) occupying its own time and space.

It is uncertain, so that the results of play cannot be pre-determined and so that the player’s initiative is involved. It is unproductive in that it creates no wealth and ends as it begins.

It is governed by rules that suspend ordinary laws and behaviors and that must be followed by players. It involves make-believe that confirms for players the existence of imagined realities that may be set against ‘real life’. Caillois argues that we can understand the complexity of games by referring to four play forms and two types of play:

1. Agon, or competition. E.g., chess is an almost purely agonistic game. 2. Alea, or chance. E.g., playing a slot machine is an almost purely aleatory game. 3. Mimicry, or mimesis, or role playing. 4. Ilinx (Greek for “whirlpool”), or vertigo, in the sense of altering perception, e.g., taking hallucinogens, riding roller coasters, children spinning until they fall down.¹⁶⁵ In short, the theoretical

162 Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games* (see note 99), 83; as to backgammon that can be traced back to Babylonian cultures (city of Ur), see David Parlett, *The Oxford History of Board Games* (see note 4), 58–87.

163 Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games* (see note 99), 167.

164 Birkhan, *Spielendes Mittelalter* (see note 10), 313.

165 I have borrowed this useful and straightforward schematic outline of Caillois’s theory from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man,_Play_and_Games; see also <https://ocw.mit.edu/courses/comparative-media-studies-writing/cms-600-videogame-theory-and-analysis-fall-2007/projects/w1.pdf> (both last accessed on July 3, 2018). For scholarly reflections on Caillois’s observations,

discussion on play, pleasure, and leisure has reached already a considerable level of maturity today, which means that we can draw productively from that discourse for an in-depth analysis of the notions of games in the pre-modern world.

Didactic Writers, with an Emphasis on Konrad von Haslau and Hugo von Trimberg

Negative comments about people's behavior, young and old, have regularly provided us with great opportunities to gain insight into common practices the critics do not agree with, whether they are accurate in their assessment or tend to exaggerate. The narrative genre more or less set in with the work by the Spanish poet Petrus Alfonsi, a converted Jew, his *Disciplina clericalis* (early twelfth century), which is a collection of instructive stories teaching lessons about basic human values and ideals and which were often drawn from Arabic and Jewish wisdom literature, even if the direct connections might be difficult to trace today). This collection deeply influenced later writers all over Europe through its effective approach to instruction, addressing a wide range of situations and behaviors in human life.

One of them was the Middle High German poet from the late thirteenth century, Konrad von Haslau, who followed Petrus to some extent in the use of the larger framework (*Pfennigbuße*), but expanded his concept considerable by presenting playful moments that commonly lead people astray because gambling or playing with cards is involved.¹⁶⁶ He discusses the many ways that young people misbehave, using a host of highly idiosyncratic terms, all implying silly, foolish,

see Jeannine Worms, *Entretiens avec Roger Caillois*. Mobile matière, 19 (Paris: La Différence, 1991). As to Callois himself, see Guillaume Bridet, *Roger Caillois*. Littérature, 170 (Paris: Larousse, 2013). For a collection of critical approaches to Caillois, see the contributions to *Quadrillages labyrinthiques: l'échiquier Caillois: centenaire de la naissance de Roger Caillois*, ed. Valeria Emi Sgueglia. Littératures, 68 (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2013).

166 Konrad von Haslau, *Der Jüngling, nach der Heidelberger Handschrift Cpg. 341 mit den Lesarten der Leipziger Handschrift 946 und der Kalocsaer Handschrift (Cod. Bodmer 72)*, ed. Walter Tauber. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 97 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1984); for a quick introduction, see, for instance, Elisabeth Wunderle, "Konrad von Haslau," *Literatur Lexikon: Autoren und Werke deutscher Sprache*, ed. Walther Killy. Vol. 6 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Lexikon Verlag, 1990), 482; Hans-Friedrich Rosenfeld, "Konrad von Haslau," *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, ed. Fritz Wagner. Vol. 12 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1979), 541–42; online at: <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd103138773.html#ndbcontent>; for a description of the three surviving manuscripts, see <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/werke/1291> (both last accessed on July 25, 2018).

playful, or nonsensical activities that ought to be repressed in the process of a rigorous education (e. g., vv. 257–68).

For him, playing ruins one's good character: "spil machet manchen boesen wiht, / daz man in swachet und missetrowet, / so man in in boser fure schowet" (vv. 298–300; gaming makes people evil and the others disrespect and distrust him when they observe him acting so badly). Those who engage in playing games experience envy and hatred and ruin their own virtues, as expressed by the display of anger, by cursing, and a readiness to start fighting physically (vv. 323–24). Gambling would be even worse and against God's commands (v. 350), and no one could rely on gaining money in this activity, which would be contrary to all religious honor anyway (v. 359–60). However, Konrad excludes board games (chess?) because they are acceptable as a proper form of entertainment at the right time and without leading to one's loss of money, for instance (vv. 173–75). Intelligent and well-mannered players know how to lose and to win their games (vv. 377–79). By contrast, playing with dice and for money would be a person's moral and economic downfall and drive him into insanity (vv. 387–415). From here, Konrad turns to other vices, such as excessive drinking, wearing luxurious clothing, and the danger of spoiling a child out of too much love, neglecting to give rules and directions (vv. 1205–20).

Insofar as similar works exist from across Europe in the late Middle Ages and beyond, we can learn much about the various aspects of game, play, leisure, and other forms of pleasure when we consider what a didactic writer commented on in negative terms. The thirteenth-century English poet Walter of Bibbesworth in his *Le Tretiz* pursued the same interests, and his didactic narrative could also be quarried for information about young people's proper behavior and hence about games, pleasures, leisure activities, and play.¹⁶⁷

One such author was the Franconian Hugo von Trimberg who composed his voluminous *Renner* in Middle High German sometime at the beginning of the fourteenth century.¹⁶⁸ Hugo was born around 1235 and died after 1313, teaching

167 Karen K. Jambeck, "The 'Tretiz' of Walter of Bibbesworth: Cultivating the Vernacular," *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: The Results of a Paradigm Shift in the History of Mentality*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and New York: Walter De Gruyter, 2005), 159–83.

168 Hugo von Trimberg, *Der Renner*, ed. Gustav Ehrismann. Mit einem Nachwort und Ergänzungen von Günther Schweikle. Deutsche Nachdrucke. Reihe: Texte des Mittelalters (1909; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970), vol. II, 39, vv. 10357–58. For some critical comments on this comprehensive didactic work, see Jutta Goheen, *Mensch und Moral im Mittelalter: Geschichte und Fiktion in Hugos von Trimberg 'Der Renner'* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990); Inés de la Cuadra, *Der 'Renner' Hugos von Trimberg: Allegorische Denkformen und literarische Traditionen*. Germanistische Texte und Studien, 63 (Hildesheim, Zürich, and New York: Olms-Weidmann, 1999); Rudolf Kilian Weigand, *Der "Renner" des Hugo von Trimberg: Überlieferung, Quellenab-*

in Bamberg since 1260 at the Canons' school of St. Gangolf in the suburb of Teuerstadt. He was the composer of eight works in German and of five in Latin, basically all intended for teaching purposes. Around 1300 he completed his massive didactic treatise, *Der Renner* (The Runner), consisting of 26, 611 verses, which address, basically, the entire extent of major teaching subjects, including morality, ethics, religion, and many different didactic aspects, then the Seven Deadly Sins, and consequently also the various types of games and forms of entertainment. Hugo achieved great fame with his almost encyclopedic work, as the large number of surviving manuscripts indicates.¹⁶⁹ The two author manuscripts (holographs) have survived in thirty-four (ms. A) and thirty-one (ms. B) copies; an additional version, somewhat shortened but richly illustrated, has come down to us in fifteen manuscripts. *Der Renner* was first printed in 1549, and various poets from the Baroque and the Enlightenment era (Gottsched, Gellert, and Lessing) were familiar with this lengthy treatise and made concrete plans to edit anew for modern audiences. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that Hugo's didactic poem represents one of the most popular contributions to medieval German literature, and in this regard his comments about people's pleasure and leisure prove to be highly valuable.¹⁷⁰

As a didactic author, Hugo does not hesitate to address a wide range of topics, and so we also hear many comments about common forms of pleasure and leisure, games, entertainment, and the consumption of alcohol (10237–504),

hängigkeit und Struktur einer spätmittelalterlichen Lehrdichtung. Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter, 35 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2000); Albrecht Classen, "Thomasin von Zerclaere's *Der Wælsche Gast* and Hugo von Trimberg's *Renner*. Two Middle High German Didacticians Focus on the Gender Relationship," *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*, ed. Juanita Ferros Ruys. Disputatio, 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 205–29; Christoph Huber, "Hugo von Trimberg," *Killy Literaturlexikon: Autoren und Werke des deutschsprachigen Kulturraumes*, ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann. 2nd completely rev. ed. Vol. 5 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 650–52.

169 For a detailed listing of all manuscripts, see the online manuscript census (Marburg) at: <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/werke/653> (last accessed on May 18, 2018). Despite much voiced criticism of the online encyclopedia, some of the articles published there are truly of high, even scholarly quality, and this is the case with Hugo von Trimberg as well: [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Der_Renner#Exkurs_II:_Die_%E2%80%99Reitermetapher%E2%80%99C_\(V_13899_%E2%80%9913964\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Der_Renner#Exkurs_II:_Die_%E2%80%99Reitermetapher%E2%80%99C_(V_13899_%E2%80%9913964)), last edited on May 11, 2018 (last accessed on May 18, 2018). The structural overview offered here is most useful.

170 Bruno Jahn, "Hugo von Trimberg," *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon: Das Mittelalter*, ed. Wolfgang Achnitz. Vol. 6 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 625–42; here 628–36; Günther Schweikle, "Hugo von Trimberg," *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, ed. Kurt Ruh. Vol. 4 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 1983), 268–82.

which often tends to lead to excesses and even violence.¹⁷¹ The entire world is described as a game: “Der werlde spiel” (11313), which is meant, of course, metaphorically, implying that people are misled by the material existence from their ultimate path toward spirituality, being blinded by the material temptations, and constantly in danger of losing their soul and falling into the trap of hell (11339–40).

Yet, then he turns to concrete aspects of playing and the many forms of entertainment people tend to be committed to. First, he mentions throwing dice and laments that if people had knelt as many times before the altar as they have knelt before the table with the dice they would not have to worry about their afterlife (11344–51). Gamers, to use a modern word, are, as Hugo states, in constant danger of losing their honor and their virtues (11352), and they easily fall prey to cursing, lying, deceiving, hatred, and envy (11367–70). Whatever one gains in a game, one would have to give up later after death (11384–85). Irrespective of his moral consternation, here we face a most important narrative mirror revealing how people spent their free time at Hugo’s time; certainly less in the church than the author would prefer it, and much more so in the tavern and other secular places where gambling and throwing dice were possible and encouraged, often leading to a kind of addiction (see above). Social critics such as Hugo thus emerge as excellent witnesses of the everyday culture of their time, whether they liked it or not, and revealed, through their criticism, how people were actually passing their free time and what they did with their spare money. The most negative comments about leisure and pleasure actually tend to mirror what the social conditions were actually like. The more Hugo condemned, for instance, leisure activities such as gambling, the more we may assume that those were actually practiced all the time and represented the standard form of entertainment in the thirteenth century at many different social

171 For numerous other literary texts dealing with excessive consumption of alcohol, see my contribution to this volume. Cf. also Reinhold Kaiser, together with Marie-Thérèse Kaiser-Guyot, *Trunkenheit und Gewalt im Mittelalter* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2002). He offers a broad and in-depth perspective about the phenomenon of drinking and drunkenness throughout the entire Middle Ages, focusing primarily on the critical treatment of this vice by chroniclers and moral-theological writers, who were most concerned with misbehavior by clerics following drinking inordinate amounts of alcohol. The *vis vini* was regularly identified as the source of endless conflicts and violence, as the proverb, *in vino feritas* (215), indicates. From drunkenness resulted violence, as Honorius Augustodunensis observed in the twelfth century: “*hinc vinolentia, inde violentia*” (215). Drunkenness was the common consequence of excessive drinking alone or in groups, but Kaiser does not consider the degree to which this action or behavior contributed to social entertainment, to the enjoyment of pleasure and leisure.

levels, both in the city and in the countryside, at court and even within the monastery (?); otherwise he would not have a reason to criticize those games.

In order to offer a concrete image, Hugo refers to ball games in which the players have to throw a ball toward a goal, and they quickly fight over whose ball might be closer. The players go down on their knees and even lie flat on the earth in order to measure who might have won, which makes them look like old dead women whom the worms are eating. The more they try to gain victory, the more they lose their reason (11425): “Si ligent hie rehte als diu kint, / Diu grüebelîn grabent an der strâzen” (11426–27; They lie there just like the children who dig little holes in the road).¹⁷² Stern and moralizing, as Hugo always proves to be, he condemns these two players and their game of *boule*, as we would call it today, identifying them as fools because they would be able to earn much money if they used all the energy properly that they waste on this playful entertainment (11402–03).

Subsequently, Hugo mentions other games and systematically condemns them all as dangerous for people’s moral and ethical behavior and for their salvation in the end. Hugo draws both here and elsewhere extensively from classical authorities, but he also seems to be surprisingly well informed about games and their practical performance. He rejects tournaments altogether (11567–11650.), sharply condemns throwing of rocks (11651–76), wrestling and jumping (11677–82), and then, suddenly taking a surprising turn, all forms of unchastity (11727–973). This leads over to more general moralizing about women’s inappropriate dressing (12267–12440), and to criticism of dancing (12441–601). In a later context Hugo also views the various types of board games very negatively (16761–64), but he only comments bitterly that the players waste all their resources without gaining any profit from their activities. He also evaluates the activity of bowling in most negative terms (16783–92), assuming that the players would only get into fights because they believe that the others have deceived or tricked them in the course of the game. Players, altogether, in his opinion, are nothing but monkeys, or fools (16792).

Social Critics and Pleasure in the Pre-Modern World

However, Hugo does not hesitate to voice his bitter comments about many other people as well who demonstrate misbehavior, at least in his opinion, such as

172 Birkhan, *Spielendes Mittelalter* (see note 10), 190.

medical doctors, street acrobats, magicians, students, priests, cooks, musicians, and others, which actually might well be an anticipation of what we will hear later from the Humanist Sebastian Brant in his famous *Narrenschiff* (1494; Ship of Fools), though the latter takes aim at the entire world and humorously condemns all professions, age groups, and characters as ridiculous fools.¹⁷³ In particular, in chapter seventy-seven, Brant also targets gamers who spend their entire time in a tavern where they play cards, throw dice, and other games. In due course, those individuals get thirsty and start drinking too much alcohol, leading to vomiting, not to mention all the other negative consequences, such as losing money, and committing sins.¹⁷⁴ Brant concludes most poignantly:

Spyl mag gar selten sin on sünd
 Eyn spyeler ist nit gottes fründt
 Die spyeler sint des tûfels kynd.¹⁷⁵

[Game is rarely without sinfulness.
 A gamer is not God's friend,
 The gamers are the devil's children.]

We also hear of games and gaming in a very different context when theological writers (canonists and liturgists) reflected on who among the Christian community deserved a decent burial and who not. The French rector of a theological college, Jean Beleth (fl. 1135–1182), for instance, formulated this comment: “Si uero subito moriatur in ludis consuetis ut in ludo pile, potest sepeliri in cimiterio, et sine psalmis et sine obsequis” (Whoever suddenly dies in ordinary games or in a ball game can be buried in a cemetery, though without psalms and obsequies). Yet, he condemns all those who had participated in a tournament and suffered a sudden death in that knightly event.¹⁷⁶ In other words, he obviously acknowledged that playing games and seeking all kinds of entertainment was very com-

173 Joachim Knappe, “Sebastian Brant (1457–1521),” *Deutsche Dichter der frühen Neuzeit (1450–1600): ihr Leben und Werk*, ed. Stephan Füßel (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1993), 156–72.

174 I will address this issue of excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages in my contribution to this volume.

175 Sebastian Brant, *Das Narrenschiff*. Nach der Erstausgabe (Basel 1494) mit den Zusätzen der Ausgaben von 1495 und 1499 sowie den Holzschnitten der deutschen Originalausgaben, ed. Manfred Lemmer. 3rd expanded ed. Neudrucke deutscher Literaturwerke, Neue Folge, 5 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1986), ch. 77, vv. 93–95, p. 202.

176 Jean Beleth, *Summa de ecclesiasticis officiis*, ed. Heribert Douteil. CCCM, 41 A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1976), 308–09; here quoted from Schmitz-Esser, *Der Leichnam im Mittelalter* (see note 91), 522–23.

mon at his time in various, if not all social classes. In one of the miracle tales composed by Caesarius of Heisterbach in his *Dialogus miraculorum* (ca. 1240), we even learn that the Virgin Mary steps in for the knight Walter of Birbech and wins numerous jousts in a tournament because he is delayed to the tournament because he had stopped on his way in a church to hear mass in honor of the Virgin. Even though the narrator then affirms that tournaments are to be condemned according to the teachings of the Church, he still accepts that Mary could participate in a tournament and thus ensure that the devout and faithful knight Walter would gain great praise and recognition for his/her accomplishments, at least in worldly terms.¹⁷⁷

The verse narrative “The Revenge of the Husband” by Heinrich Kaufringer (ca. 1400) includes a scene in which a priest and a knight spend time together, drinking alcohol and throwing dice “to have some entertainment and enjoy their friendship.” Of course, in that process the knight understands finally that the priest is his wife’s lover, which leads to a series of terrible consequences.¹⁷⁸ Pleasure and pain are very closely associated with each other, and leisure leads to near death, at least in this account.

The Dominican preacher author Meister Ingold (first mentioned in 1415, d. between 1440 and 1450) heavily relied on the various types of games commonly played by people to address and combat the seven deadly sins. In his *Guldîn spil* (composed prior to 1431),¹⁷⁹ he identified various games that could be played to fight against those terrifying and destructive sins, such as playing with cards to resist unchastity, throwing dice to overcome greed, dancing to leave behind mel-

177 Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* (see note 43), vol. III, Distinction VII, ch. 38, pp. 1416–38; here 1416–18.

178 Albrecht Classen, *Love, Life, and Lust in Heinrich Kaufringer’s Verse Narratives* (see note 87), no. 13, pp. 65–70; here 67, vv. 156–59. For the critical edition by Paul Sappeler and the relevant research literature, see the bibliography there, and the online bibliography by Marco Heise, “Heinrich Kaufringer Bibliographie 1809–2017,” online at: <https://mittelalter.hypotheses.org/9836> (last accessed on Dec. 23, 2018). Of course, in this case the dice are made of two healthy molars extracted from the knight’s mouth against his will. The priest had wanted a proof from the knight’s wife, his mistress, that she truly loves him, and she knew how to trick her husband to allow the operation to happen although he almost dies in that process. The priest then has a goldsmith transform those molars into dice. The subsequent developments, resulting in the husband’s gruesome revenge – he cuts off the priest’s testicles, and later forces the priest to bite off his wife’s tongue while they are doing French-kissing – do not need to be discussed here in detail. For the history of tongue-kissing already in the Middle Ages, see now Peter Dinzelsbacher, “Das sexuelle Verhalten im Mittelalter I: Der Zungenkuß,” *Mediaevistik* 31 (2019; forthcoming).

179 For an online version of the 1882 edition by Edward Schröder, see https://archive.org/stream/bub_gb_bQ9BAAAAYAAJ/bub_gb_bQ9BAAAAYAAJ_djvu.txt (last accessed on July 29, 2018).

ancholy, playing music instruments to push away envy and hatred, and not to forget playing chess, which assumes a central role in his series of sermons, that serves centrally to defy arrogance.¹⁸⁰ He drew heavily from authors such as Jacobus de Cessolis via the German translation by Konrad von Ammenhausen, and Johannes Herolt, especially with regard to chess, and quite artistically wove the common knowledge about games that were popular at his time into his didactic preaching.¹⁸¹ In contrast to others, however, he did not condemn those games at all; instead he perceived in them productive measures to counteract the various deadly sins, distracting people from the usual seductions and temptations which were much worse than simple games. Chess turned into a major form of intellectual entertainment throughout the late Middle Ages, as illustrated also by the treatise on this game, *Tractatus de ludo scachorum*, composed by Paolino da Venezia from 1321 to 1339.¹⁸²

Tournaments, however, represented a real evil, especially for the clergy and the secular authorities because the potential danger that a knight might kill the opponent or die in a joust contradicted all religious teachings. Significantly, the first ban of a tournament was issued by the Council of Clermont in 1130, followed by several other similar bans during the papacy of Innocent II and then by the Council of Rheims in 1148 during the papacy of Eugene III.¹⁸³ The opposition to tournaments continued throughout the following decades, if not centuries, but the popularity of this form of knightly entertainment only grew in leaps and bounds, as perhaps best illustrated by the Styrian poet Ulrich von Liechtenstein in his *Frauendienst* from 1255.

The anonymous Middle High German verse novella *Mauritius von Craûn* from ca. 1220/1240 indirectly alludes to this huge canonical and legal problem through

180 Helmut Rosenfeld, "Meister Ingold (Wild)," *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, 2nd completely rev. and expanded ed. by Kurt Ruh et al. Vol. 4 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1983), 381–86.

181 Gisela Friedrich, "Meister Ingold," *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 10 (1974): 173–74; <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118775510.html#ndbcontent>; Jochen Schäfer, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 143.2 (2014): 183–201.

182 Paolino da Venezia, *Tractatus de ludo scachorum*, ed. Roberto Pesce. Medioevo e Rinascimento. Teste (Venice: Centro di Studi Medioevali e Rinascimentali "E.A. Cicogna", 2018).

183 Sabine Krüger, "Das kirchliche Turnierverbot im Mittelalter," *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter. Beiträge zu einer vergleichenden Formen- und Verhaltensgeschichte des Rittertums*, ed. Josef Fleckenstein. Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 80 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 401–22; here 401; see also Paul Milliman, "Games and Pastimes" (see note 8), 606–08.

the virtual use of black humor concerning the performance of a tournament.¹⁸⁴ The protagonist woos a lady who proves to be rather resistant, until she finally sets the condition that her lover organize a tournament since she herself has never witnessed one. The knight pompously fulfills her wish, but he overdoes it in every respect and transforms the tournament into a theatrical operation which allows himself to shine forth as the greatest knight who can defeat every one of his opponents with the greatest, almost ridiculous ease.

By contrast, the lady's husband, Count Beamunt, who enjoys the privilege of fighting the first joust because the tournament takes place outside of his castle, not knowing that the entire knightly entertainment serves very different purposes, namely, to cuckold him, accidentally kills his opponent, which shocks him deeply. He immediately puts down his weapons, retires to his bedroom, and keeps crying all day long over this personal tragedy. Mauritius, rather irritated over this development that could endanger his strategy to win the countess's love, urges everyone to continue with the tournament despite this accident since one dead man would not really matter for them. Everything seems to go well then, but in the evening, once Mauritius has withdrawn to his tent and has allowed the squires and others to rip his fake ship apart and to take everything from it as their reward, one of them is killed in the quarrel. Again, there is no further comment about this case as if the deadly outcome of knightly activities or of struggles among minstrels and other servants did not matter.

184 The text has been edited and translated a number of times; see my own modern German translation, *Moriz von Craün. Mittelhochdeutsch/Neuhochdeutsch*. Mittelhochdeutscher Text nach der Ausgabe von Ulrich Pretzel. Übersetzung, Kommentar und Nachwort von Albrecht Classen. Universal-Bibliothek, 8796 (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1992), which is no longer available in print, but accessible online at <http://aclassen.faculty.arizona.edu/sites/aclassen.faculty.arizona.edu/files/morizcomplete.pdf> (last accessed on June 14, 2018). See also *Mauritius von Craün*, ed. Heimo Reinitzer. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 113 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000). For an excellent study of the historical background, see Ruth Harvey, *Moriz von Craün and the Chivalric World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1961); for a detailed commentary of the entire text of this novella, see now Hubertus Fischer, *Ritter, Schiff und Dame: Mauritius von Craün; Text und Kontext*. Beiträge zur älteren Literaturgeschichte (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2006). Cf. also Sonja Glauch, *An der Schwelle zur Literatur: Elemente einer Poetik des höfischen Erzählens*. Studien zur historischen Poetik, 1 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2009). Cf. now also Sabrina Niederelz, "ritterschaft und ère / diu muoz kosten sêre: Zum Einfluss des Prologs auf die Deutung des *Mauritius von Craün*," *Der Kurzroman in den spätmittelalterlichen Sammelhandschriften Europas*, ed. Miriam Edlich-Muth. Imagines Medii Aevi, 40 (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2018), 41–54. While the text refers to the "garsûne" (1041) when Mauritius allows his squires to dismantle the ship, in reality the protagonist has invited everyone to come to his camp and take whatever they want, which certainly includes also minstrels and others. Niederelz thus would have to expand her reading of this episode in a significant way.

As far as we can tell, the historical and literary sources actually confirm that tournaments were rather brutal and could easily result in the death of a participant, which, however, did not convince the knightly class at all to abstain from this kind of sport with the highest casualties.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, as this passage powerfully illustrates, medieval culture was strongly influenced by the presence of minstrels both at court and elsewhere (cities, towns, villages), and it would be difficult to imagine pre-modern society without the entertainment offered by those artists, some of whom were also females.¹⁸⁶ The famous thirteenth-century *chanteuble*, *Aucassin et Nicolette* (maybe contemporary) confirms how much women could also be involved in the business of public entertainment, though that is not the case in the Middle High German verse narrative.¹⁸⁷

Ironically, all the knightly efforts during the day have exhausted Mauritius so much that he later falls asleep while waiting for his lady in a special room in the castle, who therefore then rejects him resolutely once she has arrived, dismissing the entire idea of courtly love, demanding an end to this game, as we could say now. Mauritius, however, is not the man to accept a 'no' as an answer after all his enormous efforts to win his lady's love. Hence, having woken up too late from a nightmare, he forcefully makes his way into the marital bedroom and scares the

185 David Crouch, *Tournament* (see note 1), 125–31; see also Paul Milliman, "Games and Pastimes" (see note 8), 606–07.

186 John Southworth, *The English Medieval Minstrel* (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Wolfeboro, NH: Boydell Press, 1989); *The Entertainer in Medieval and Traditional Culture: A Symposium*, ed. Flemming Gotthelf Andersen, Thomas Pettitt, and Reinhold Schröder (Odense: Odense University Press, 1989); G. Peters, "Urban Minstrels in Late Medieval Southern France: Opportunities, Status and Professional Relationships," *Early Music History* 19 (2000): 201–35; Wolfgang Hartung, *Minstrels in the Middle Ages: Jugglers, Poets, Musicians* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003); George Shuffelton, "Is There a Minstrel in the House?: Domestic Entertainment in Late Medieval England," *Philological Quarterly* 87.1/2 (2008): 51–77; Tito Saffioti, *Gli occhi della follia: giullari e buffoni di corte nella storia e nell'arte* (Milan: BookTime, 2009); Harald Lacina, *Die Spielleute nach spätmittelalterlichen deutschen Rechtsquellen* (Kiel: Solivagus-Verlag, 2010); Gretchen Peters, *The Musical Sounds of Medieval French Cities: Players, Patrons, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Linda Marie Zaerr, *Performance and the Middle English Romance*. Studies in Medieval Romance, 17 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2012).

187 *Aucassin et Nicolette*, édition critique par Jean Dufournet. Garnier Flammarion, 261 (Paris: Flammarion, 1984); *Aucassin and Nicolette: A Facing-Page Edition and Translation*, by Robert S. Sturges (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2015); see also *Aucassin et Nicolette*, trans. and photo-ill. by Katharine Margot Toohey (2017), online at: https://quemarpress.weebly.com/uploads/8/6/1/4/86149566/aucassin_and_nicolette_-_translation_by_k.m._toohey.pdf; for further online links to older editions, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aucassin_and_Nicolette (both last accessed on Aug. 24, 2018); cf. also Albrecht Classen, "Aucassin et Nicolette," *Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature*, ed. Jay Ruud (New York: Facts on File, 2006), 44–46.

husband so much out of his wits that the latter jumps up, hits his shin, and faints. Thereupon Mauritius lies down in the bed next to his lady, who finds this all rather astonishing, but in that situation, without her husband's protection, does not dare to protest, so the grotesque scene concludes with both sleeping with each other, and this apparently not with her real approval, to put it mildly.

Whether we might have to talk here about 'date rape' or a similar crime, has been hotly debated by research, but in the present context all that matters is that the verse novella intensively reflects on the common practices during tournaments and ridicules them at the same time. The poet specifically intended to project an image of ordinary knightly entertainment, even though the outcome proves to be almost absurd and shocking, especially because Mauritius at the end gets up from the bed and abandons his lady, blaming her for being disloyal and an untrustworthy mistress.¹⁸⁸ Much more significant, however, proves to be the realization that the poet presents a curious and rather unique scenario of courtly love through which he invites his audience to engage with the critical issues and to play with them experimentally, challenging each reader/listener to take a position in this highly problematic and controversial situation of a virtually fake tournament and the highly dubious wooing scene where nothing works any longer according to traditional norms.

Here the basic rules of the play have been disturbed and problems emerge everywhere because the ideals have been lost. Nevertheless, the very failure of the entire operation sheds significant light on thirteenth-century courtly culture, which appealed even to the early sixteenth-century audience when the poem was copied down by Hans Ried for the first time in the highly representative Ambras manuscript ca. 1504–1516/17 on behalf of Emperor Maximilian I. We could thus go so far as to claim, as even postmodern theory suggests, that literature represents a form of game in which numerous strategies, options of human behavior, conflicts, and ideals are operated with, inviting the audience to engage with them playfully and reflectively, alone or in a group. It deserves also mention that Mauritius operates on the tournament field like a ball kicked around on a

188 Albrecht Classen, "Courtliness and Transgression at Arthur's Court: With Emphasis on the Middle High German Poet Neidhart and the Anonymous Verse Novella *Mauritius von Craûn*," *Arthuriana* 20.4 (2010): 3–19; id., "Irony in Medieval and Early Modern German Literature (Nibelungenlied, *Mauritius von Craûn*, Johannes von Tepl's Ackermann): The Encounter of the Menschlich-Allzumenschlich in a Medieval Context," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 113.2 (2014): 184–205; id., "From Erotic Scandal to the Violent Scandalous: The Translation of the *Fabel* into the Courtly Verse Novella *Mauritius von Craûn*: Intercultural Transformations as Results of Translation Strategies," *Leuvense Bijdragen* 101 (2017): 1–20.

game field: “er vuor umbe als ein bal” (1025).¹⁸⁹ It remains an open-ended question whether the protagonist is actually the active ball game player, or whether he operates on a game board driven by some unnamed player beyond the text.

The tournament was the most spectacular event for the knightly class, but in the later Middle Ages it became a popular sport and entertainment for the urban citizens as well who enjoyed the great opportunities provided by such events to revive medieval knighthood, to practice chivalry, to showcase their own wealth, and to organize a local theater performance.¹⁹⁰ But this should not blind us to the fact that many different ball games were also rather common, as numerous indirect allusions indicate.

For instance, Otto of Freising related most vividly, when he discussed the siege of Crema in 1159 by the army of Frederick Barbarossa, how both sides desecrated the corpses of the opponents and in this context resorted to a morbid form of ball game: “Erat autem videre miseriam, quando hi qui foris, occisorum amputatis capitibus, eis quasi pila ludebant et a dextra in levam reiectis crudeli ostentui et ludibrio habebant” (It was gruesome to see how those who were outside cut off the heads of the dead and played with them as if they were balls, and threw them from the right to the left hand and had their fun with this).¹⁹¹

189 See the contributions to *Literatur als Spiel: evolutionsbiologische, ästhetische und pädagogische Konzepte*, ed. Thomas Anz. Spectrum Literaturwissenschaft, 22 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009).

190 Karl Stehlin, *Ein spanischer Bericht über ein Turnier in Schaffhausen im Jahr 1436* (Frankfurt a. M.: Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, 2007); Julian Jachmann, “... in Ritterspielen und hohem Gebreng frembder Nationen erfahren: Feste und Turniere der Fugger im frühneuzeitlichen Augsburg,” *Herrschaft – Architektur – Raum: Festschrift für Ulrich Schütte zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Stephanie Hahn (Berlin: Lukas Verlag für Kunst- und Geistesgeschichte, 2008), 261–75; Vanina Kopp, together with Constanze Buyken and Guillaume Bureaux, “Stadt, Land, Hof: Spiele und Wettkämpfe in der mittelalterlichen Soziabilität,” *Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen Residenzen-Kommission: Mitteilungen der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen: Stadt und Hof* 4 (2015): 17–29; see also the contributions to *Ritterturnier: Geschichte einer Festkultur*, ed. Elke Jezler (Lucerne: Quaternio Verlag, 2014), a catalog accompanying an exhibition in the Museum zu Allerheiligen in Schaffhausen, Switzerland, April 10 to September, 21, 2014. The interest in knightly tournaments continued well into the eighteenth century, see *Lista der Aufziehenden Ritter Bey dem Tournier, So in München, in dem gewöhnlichen Tournier-Hauß gehalten würdet; Auf den 4. Martij, Anno 1734* (Munich: Johann Jacob Vötter, 1734).

191 Otto of Freising and Rahewin, *Gesta Friderici I. imperatoris*, ed. Georg Waitz and Bernhard von Simson. Monumenta Germaniae Historica, SS rer. Germ. 46 (Hanover and Leipzig: Hahn, 1912); for a German translation, see *Die Taten Friedrichs oder richtiger Cronica* (AQ 17), trans. by Adolf Schmidt and ed. Franz-Josef Schmale (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974), 292–93 [IV,55]; for an English translation, see *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, trans. and annotated with an intro. by Charles Christopher Mierow. With the collaboration of Richard

A literary example for the virtually same activity, playing ball with a decapitated head, is given by the anonymous *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (late fourteenth century). As soon as Gawain has completed his task of cutting off the the Green Knight's head, it falls onto the ground and rolls around, which gives the entire company a chance to kick it around as if it were a soccer ball: "Pat þe bit of þe broun stel bot on þe grounde. / Þe fayre hede fro þe halce hit to þe erþe, / Þat fele hit foyned wyth her fete, þere hit forth roled."¹⁹² As grotesque as these comments might seem to be, they all confirm that the notion of a game involving a ball was not at all unknown in the pre-modern era.¹⁹³ The ruffian poet François Villon (1431–after 1463), for instance, remarks in one of his *lais* in which he sarcastically outlines in detail what he intends to leave behind after his death, "Item, et je adjointz a la crosse / Celle de la rue Saint Anthoine / Ou ung billart de quoy on crosse" (no. 29, 1–3; or 225–27; "Item, I add on to the stick / The house sign of Saint Antoine-Street / Or else a club for driving balls").¹⁹⁴ The more ordinary or trivial those comments appear to be, mentioned just in passing, the more we can assume that ball games were most common and thus could easily serve as metaphors for a variety of purposes. This also applies to a remark by the notorious fifteenth-century French poet François Villon who mentions in one of his *ballades* about the exchanges between men and women at large, all pertaining to sexual contacts: "Or ont ces folz amans le bont / Et les dames prins la vollee; / C'est le droit loier qu'amans ont" (no. 64, vv. 616–19; "Now these mad lovers get the bounce; / The ball is in the ladies' court. / For lovers that's the standard wage," 95).¹⁹⁵ In a later stanza, Villon comments,

Emery (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); see Romedio Schmitz-Esser, *Der Leichnam* (see note 91), 642, note 51, with more references to scholarly studies on this text. See also Paul Milliman, "Games and Pastimes" (see note 8), 608–09, with further references to ball games and relevant scholarship. Cf., above all, Heiner Gillmeister, "The Language of English Sports, Medieval and Modern," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 233 (1996): 268–85.

192 For an online version, based on the edition by J. R. R. Tolkien and E. V. Gordon (1967), see <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=cme;idno=Gawain>. See also the edition by Ross G. Arthur: http://www.yorku.ca/inpar/ssggk_replica.pdf (both last accessed on June 17, 2018).

193 John Marshall Carter, *Medieval Games: Sports and Recreations in Feudal Society*. Contributions to the Study of World History, 30 (New York, Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press, 1992).

194 François Villon, *Complete Poems*. Ed. with English trans. and commentary by Barbara N. Sargent-Baur. Toronto Medieval Texts and Translations, 9 (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 34–35.

195 Jane H. M. Taylor, *The Poetry of François Villon: Text and Context*. Cambridge Studies in French (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Mike Freeman, *François Villon in his Works: The Villain's Tale*. Faux titre, 195 (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2000).

rather sarcastically, “Je congnois approucher ma seuf; / Je crache blanc comme coton, / Jacoppins groz comme ung estuef” (no. 72, 1–2; “I recognize my thirst’s approach, / I spit out white as cotton is, / ‘Jacobins’ big as tennis balls,” 103).¹⁹⁶

Games in a Sixteenth-Century Chronicle

Turning to the sixteenth century, we hear the same criticism voiced in the famous but heretofore fairly rarely studied family chronicle the *Zimmern Chronicle*, by the Swabian Count Froben Christoph von Zimmern, who composed it in the mid-1560s.¹⁹⁷ Here we discover an intriguing little anecdote, which sheds significant light on the larger issue, told about Count Werner Wilhelm von Zimmern and his son Johann Werner. The latter acquired a thorough education while studying at various universities in Bonn, Freiburg i. Br., and Vienna, gaining a good command of French, a thorough understanding of astronomy, geometry, and mathematics, law, poetry, rhetoric, and also music, that is, the seven liberal arts and even more. Moreover, this young man displayed such a pleasant demeanor and behavior that he was liked by everyone. However, having returned home from his studies, he proved to be hopelessly addicted to gambling and other games – probably a satirical comment on the corrupting influence of university life on the young people: “ain solchen lust zum spilen getragen” (205; he had such an interest in gaming). We are not told what kind of games he is pursuing, but since there are financial gains and losses, we can assume that here we face some kind of gambling games.

His father quickly realizes that he cannot remedy the situation and has no authority to prevent his son from becoming increasingly a victim of the allure of gaming, but he wants Johann Werner at least to learn all the tricks involved in those games – “will ich in zu allen spilen unterrichten lassen, damit er allen vorthail und haimliche verborgne stuck auf dem spil wisse und also ain andern villeicht das sein ehe, dann im ain anderer etwas, abbreche oder en-

196 As to the invention of the tennis racket, see Gillmeister, *Tennis: A Cultural History* (see note 54), 101–02.

197 *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern: Handschriften 580 und 581 der Fürstlich Fürstenbergischen Hofbibliothek Donaueschingen*, ed. Hansmartin Decker-Hauff, together with Rudolf Seigel. Vol. 1 (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1964), 205. The two manuscripts containing the chronicle, 580 and 581, were acquired by the Württembergische Landesbibliothek in 1993. For a detailed and well researched introduction with full scholarship, see now https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikisource/de/4/4c/Zimmerische_Chronik_Enzyklop%C3%A4discher_Teil.pdf (last accessed on May 20, 2018).

tziehe” (205; I want to get him educated in all games in order for him to know all advantages and secret strategies better than others who might otherwise take something away from him). The intention is clear, and pedagogically actually rather wise because his son would then no longer lose so much money in this endeavor, which could even endanger the family property: “ain unaußsprechentliche beschwerdt” (205; an unspeakable burden). Amazingly, once his expert teacher, a Jew from Villingen in the Black Forest region – is this an anti-Judaic swipe? – has taught him all there is to know about how to (ab)use the rules of the games to one’s own advantage, the young man quickly realizes that this is all deception and trickery, so he suddenly feels disgusted, rejects all gambling, and is thus healed from his addiction.¹⁹⁸ As the chronicler thus demonstrates, playing games and translating those into gambling opportunities was a lure most people could not resist easily, and this already in the Middle Ages. In fact, nothing has changed in this regard until today, despite the heavy religious legal, moral, and other constraints that have been imposed on gambling since pre-modern times. Pleasure and leisure constituted also critical aspects in pre-modern culture, as countless comments against excessive gambling, bowling, card games, and the like, indicate. As Arno Borst confirms:

Alle haben sie gerne gespielt, solche, die das Spielen berufsmäßig als “Profis” betrieben, die Bettler und Vagabunden, die ehrsamten Bürger, die ritterliche Gesellschaft auf der Burg, wo man mit spitzen Fingern Schachfiguren schob.¹⁹⁹

[Everyone enjoyed playing games; those who carried out games professionally, the beggars and vagabonds, the honorable urban citizens, the noble society in the castle, where they moved the chess figures with pointed fingers.]

198 Arnold Borst, *Alltagsleben im Mittelalter* (Frankfurt a. M.: Insel Verlag, 1983), 295–296. It is typical of these kinds of cultural histories that there is no clear apparatus, no reference to the original source, no critical assessment, and only a general list of more or less relevant studies. For another approach to this voluminous family chronicle, see Erica Bastress-Dukehart, *The Zimmern Chronicle: Nobility, Memory and Self-Representation in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002); Judith J. Hurwich, *Noble Strategies: Marriage and Sexuality in the Zimmern Chronicle*. Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies Series, 75 (Kirkville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2006). For an online version of the text, see https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Zimmerische_Chronik#Band_1 (last accessed on May 19, 2018). See also Marija Javor Briski, *Die Zimmerische Chronik: Studien zur Komik als Medium der Dialogisierung des historischen Diskurses*. Bayreuther Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft, 27 (Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 2005).

199 Borst, *Alltagsleben im Mittelalter* (see note 198), 298.

Both visual art works and lyric poetry, such as by the Austrian-Bavarian poet Neidhart (not: von Reuenthal), historiographical narratives, legal texts, and others provide good insight into the world of pre-modern games, and we would be badly misled if we naively assumed that pleasure and leisure were only the product of the modern capitalistic society.²⁰⁰ The entire world of secular literature in the Middle Ages, despite very often being highly didactic and moralizing, was essentially predicated on the idea of entertainment and play.²⁰¹ For instance, The *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* from ca. 1455, today kept in the Kunstkammer at the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (Vienna), provides us with a fascinating example demonstrating the great relevance of card games in pre-modern courtly culture. This is a major fifteenth-century card game of forty-eight beautifully illustrated cards, that is, a handmade deck commissioned by a major patron, perhaps Ladislas the Posthumous, king of Hungary and Bohemia and Duke of Austria, as some scholars have speculated, or by another individual. It is one of the oldest and completely preserved card games beautifully illustrated at great costs for the wealthy patron. Each suit sign carries the coats of arms of the four larger continental kingdoms: France, Germany, Bohemia and Hungary, and each card presents a major or minor office holder at court, always including also the fool (male or female). Other similar card games were the *Ambraser Hofjagdspiel* (ca. 1440 – 1445), the *Flemish Hunting Deck* (ca. 1470 – 1480; also known as the *Cloister Game*, today kept at The Cloisters in New York), the *Stuttgarter Kartenspiel* (ca. 1430; “Stuttgart deck”), and the so-called Italian *Mantegna Tarocchi* from ca. 1465 (Ferrara), all of which confirm both the great relevance of such games for elite courtly society (and probably also for the lower classes) as a form of common entertainment and also their importance for us today as mirrors of pre-modern culture. While playing that card game, those involved were presented with the common functions assumed by individuals at court, including the king and the queen, the marshal, the court chaplain, the chancellor, the physician, the herald, the cook, the hunter, the baker, and the messenger.²⁰² Game and real life here intimately intertwined, very similar to the chess game.

200 Borst, *Alltagsleben im Mittelalter* (see note 198), 300–04; Birkhan, *Spielendes Mittelalter* (see note 10), 99–263.

201 Otto Neudeck, “Das Spiel mit den Spielregeln: Zur literarischen Emanzipation von Formen körperhaft-ritualisierter Kommunikation im Mittelalter,” *Euphorion* 95.3 (2001): 287–303.

202 *Hofämterspiel*, ed. Ernst Rudolf Ragg, 2nd ed. *Berühmte Kartenspiele* (Vienna: Piatnik, 1991); Ulrike Wörner, *Die Dame im Spiel: Spielkarten als Indikatoren des Wandels von Geschlechterbildern und Geschlechterverhältnissen an der Schwelle zur Frühen Neuzeit* (Münster, Munich, et al.: Waxmann, 2010); see also Maria Raid, “Das Ambraser Hofämterspiel – Kleidung als Ausdruck von Stand und Stellung in der höfischen Gesellschaft des 15. Jahrhunderts,” *Jahrbuch*

Games, Joy, Play within the Church

While gambling represented a moral weakness and maybe even a vice, there were countless other forms of entertainment, play, and enjoyment, both at court and in the city, in the village and in the monastery. After all, even within the Christian Church, playing, at least in the form of dancing, was not that unusual, whether we think of the standard ritual or the common liturgy. As we have learned only recently, even dancing during mass or subsequently in honor of God was not prohibited.²⁰³ The large corpus of religious plays that increasingly included more secular themes and aimed at public entertainment underscores this phenomenon.²⁰⁴ Insofar as many aspects within the mass, but also the many different rituals observed by the monks, constituted elements of performance, scholars such as Rainer Buland, Arnold Angenendt, Jörs Sonntag, Alessandra Rizzi, Kay Peter Jankrift, Jean-Michel Mehl, or Nicolangelo D'Acunto have strongly argued to draw from the notion of game in order to comprehend the

Netzwerk Mode Textil (Augsburg: Wißner Verlag, 2018), 10–21; and eadem, “The *Ambraser Hofämterspiel*: Playing Cards as a Visual Source for Courtly Life during the Late Middle Ages,” in this volume. For a table of cards used in that game, and some good images of various cards, see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hofamterspiel> (last accessed on Aug. 21, 2018). For further illustrated examples of medieval card games, see Tim Husband, “Living by Their Wits: Cards Games in the Middle Ages,” blog on The Met website at <https://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/in-season/2016/playing-card-games>, on the occasion of the exhibition “The World in Play: Luxury Cards, 1430–1540” there in the Museum in 2016. All 110 objects along with a detailed description about the date and provenance are now online at: <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/objects?exhibitionId=5a6028bc-bddb-495f-88d8-4a3d2275e5e5>. See also the contributions to *Playthings in Early Modernity: Party Games, Word Games, Mind Games*, ed. Allison M. Levy. Ludic Cultures, 1100–1700 (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2017).

203 Philip Knäble, *Eine tanzende Kirche: Initiation, Ritual und Liturgie im spätmittelalterlichen Frankreich* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2016); Albrecht Classen, “‘And they laughed after all’: Comedy on the Late Medieval German Stage: With a Focus on the *Hessisches Weihnachtsspiel* and the *Innsbrucker Osterspiel*. The Blending of the Sacred with the Mundane,” *Medievalia et Humanistica* (forthcoming).

204 See the contributions to *Religiosus ludens: das Spiel als kulturelles Phänomen in mittelalterlichen Klöstern und Orden*, ed. Jörg Sonntag. Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte, 122 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013). For a solid introduction to religious plays, see Ursula Schulze, *Geistliche Spiele im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit: on der liturgischen Feier zum Schauspiel, eine Einführung* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2012); see also the contributions to *Das Geistliche Spiel des europäischen Spätmittelalters*, ed. Wernfried Hofmeister and Cora Dietl. Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft, 20 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2015). As to the history of gambling, see David G. Schwartz, *Roll the Bones: The History of Gambling* (New York: Gotham Books, 2006).

phenomenon of the *religiosus ludens*, meaning that even the Catholic Church relied heavily on the concrete, specific, but then also metaphorical concepts of play and game, even though for very serious purposes and not at all simply for pleasure and leisure.²⁰⁵ Considering the ever growing number of religious and then also secular plays (Shrovetide Plays) during the late Middle Ages, we can identify here a major forum for public entertainment and also spiritual uplifting. Humor and didacticism easily coupled with religious teachings, and considering how many days some of those plays took to perform completely, we recognize here a major textual genre mirroring pleasure and leisure.²⁰⁶

The thirteenth-century anonymous religious verse narrative of “Le Tombeor de Nostre Dame,” a most charming and revealing tale concerning medieval spirituality, underscores how much even direct connections with the Virgin Mary were considered possible through a playful form of dance or acrobatics. Although the poor tumbler is not able to participate in the expected rituals during the liturgy, he quickly finds an alternative when hiding in the crypt of their monastery church. There, in front of a sculpture of the Virgin Mary, he begins his own ritualistic practice by performing all the vaults and jumps that he knows best. He is soon observed by another monk who felt suspicions about his behavior, but instead of criticizing the tumbler, he quickly understands that he is performing the same service for the Virgin Mary as they do, not through prayer and reading mass, but through a playful, dance-like act. Indeed, the monk realizes that while they all prey for this poor man, he is playing for them, achieving the same level of spirituality in physical terms as they do in intellectual terms. He laughs out of happiness about what he has witnessed, and then informs the abbot. The two then return to the crypt and are blessed with a divine vision. The tumbler carries out this service to such an extent that eventually, unbeknownst to himself, the Mother of God, with a host of angels, appears and graces him for his deep faith and devotion that he has demonstrated through his action.

The abbot realizes that a true miracle has happened here, and instead of expelling the simple man who cannot perform the duties of a monk, he praises him as a true saint, begging him to pray for the entire monastic community. The playful performance in the crypt thus emerges as the best manifestation of honest and profound faith.²⁰⁷ The experience of God was not supposed to be a painful

205 See the contributions to *Religiosus ludens* (see note 204).

206 Eugene Fink, *Play as Symbol of the World and Other Writings* (see note 159), 27.

207 *The Tumbler of Our Lady (Le Jongleur de Notre Dame) and Other Miracles*, trans. from the Middle French with intro. and notes by Alice Kemp-Welch. The New Medieval Library (London: Chatto and Windus, 1908), 3–29; online at: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433081929279;view=1up;seq=29> (last accessed on May 20, 2018). This text does not appear in

one, even if many mystics reported of such in their visions. In reality, the joy of this personal encounter with the Godhead represented the apogee in human existence, and could almost be described as a divine dance involving the mystic and God. However, it might go beyond the possible to correlate mysticism with playfulness, games, and simple human joy any more closely. If we widened our perspective, we could even discover archetypal parallels in the world of Hindu religions, if we think of the image of Shiva Nataraja, who is a Hindu deity as a dancer, or in the world of Islamic religion, if we consider the dancing derwishes. Other religions also integrate play and dance into their rituals, so “The Tumbler” really mirrors an archetypal element in the human quest for true spirituality.

Nicholas of Cusa

By contrast, in the late Middle Ages we face the wonderful opportunity to examine in detail an entire philosophical treatise focused on the issue of game, Nicholas of Cusa’s *Dialogus de ludo globi* (1st part: 1442, 2nd part: 1443).²⁰⁸ Of course,

the critical editions by Gautier, as has often been assumed; see Gautier de Coincy, *Les miracles de la Sainte-Vierge*, ed. M. l’Abbé Poquet (1857; Geneva, Slatkine Reprints, 1972); C. H. C. Wright, *A History of French Literature* (1912; New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1969), 55, already determined that this Marian legendary tale, which he identified as “Tombeor Nostre Dame,” did not originate from Gautier. See the edition by Wendelin Foerster, “Del tumbleor Nostre Dame,” *Romania* 2 (1873): 315–25; see also *Del tumbleor Nostre Dame: altfranzösische Marienlegende (um 1200)*, ed. Erhard Lommatzsch. *Romanische Texte*, 1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1920); *Le jongleur de Notre-Dame*, traduit et commenté par Paul Bretel. Traductions des classiques français du Moyen Âge, 64 (Paris: H. Champion; Geneva: Editions Slatkine, 2003). See also the impressive webpage with the relevant bibliographical information, at: https://www.arlima.net/qt/tumbleor_nostre_dame.html (last accessed on May 20, 2018). For a solid critical analysis, focusing on the reception history, see Jan M. Ziolkowski, “Juggling the Middle Ages: The Reception of *Our Lady’s Tumbler* and *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*,” *Studies in Medievalism* XV (2006): 157–97; Albrecht Classen, “The Challenges of the Humanities, Past, Present, and Future: Why the Middle Ages Mean So Much For Us Today and Tomorrow,” *Thallosis* 2 (2017): 191–217; here 203.

208 Nikolaus von Kues, *Gespräch über das Globusspiel*. Auf der Grundlage des Textes der kritischen Ausgabe neu übersetzt und mit Einleitung und Anmerkungen hrsg. von Gerda von Bredow. Lateinisch-deutsch. Schriften des Nikolaus von Kues in deutscher Übersetzung, 22 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1999), IX. See also Morimichi Watanabe, *Nicholas of Cusa – A Companion to His Life and His Times*, ed. Gerald Christianson and Thomas M. Izbicki. Schriften des Nikolaus von Kues in deutscher Übersetzung, 22 (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001) – it is not clear whether Watanabe composed all entries himself, or whether this was an editorial/writers’ team; Clyde Lee Miller, *Reading Cusanus: Metaphor and Dialectic in a Conjectural Universe*. *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy*, 37 (Washington, DC: The

Nicholas was not an avid gamer, and he did not even intend to write about games as such; instead this treatise aimed at exploring in a novel way the relationship between the individual and God by means of mathematical reflections on the globe. The *Dialogus* was only one of many other studies composed by him during those years, and all were approaching the same topic from more or less the same perspective, probing how human spirituality could be achieved, such as his *De venatione sapientiae* (1463).²⁰⁹ As Morimichi Watanabe explains,

He wrote in *On the Vision of God* (*De visione Dei*) of 1453 that God dwells within a paradise of the coincidence of opposites (*coincidentia oppositorum*), which is surrounded by a wall. The wall is sometimes called the wall of paradise, that is, beyond both reason and intellect. Cusanus' search for God then progressed and resulted in the concept of "can-is" or "actualized possibility" (*possest*) in the *Triologus on Actualized Possibility* (*Triologus de possest*) of 1460. In 1463 he composed an overview of his thought, *On the Pursuit of Wisdom* (*De venatione sapientiae*), which reflected similar ideas. Then, as a result of his philosophical and theological ascent to God in the Easter season of 1464, he wrote *On the Summit of Contemplation* (*De apice theoriae*). He said: "I once thought that it was better to be found in the shade. But truth is great power, and in it Power itself shines brightly."²¹⁰

In the remarkable *Dialogus de ludo globi* the theological-philosophical author endeavors to utilize for his interpretative purposes the metaphor of a ball game in which the balls cannot roll completely smoothly and always take a surprising direction contrary to the player's intention. Understanding this game would lead the individual to a comprehension of philosophy and theology at large, that is, of both life and faith, or of the self, and this in a ludic fashion.²¹¹ As Reinhold Gleis could demonstrate, Nicholas demonstrated a strong interest in craftsmanship and combined here as well the practical dimension of a ball with the theo-

Catholic University of America Press, 2003); cf. now the contributions to *600 Jahre Nikolaus von Kues; 1401–2001*, ed. Helmut Gestrich (Trier: Paulinus, 2003); see also Josef Gelmí: *Cusanus: Leben und Wirken des Universalgenies Nikolaus von Kues* (Kövelaer: Verlagsgemeinschaft topos plus, 2017). For the English translation, see Nicholas de Cusa, *De Ludo Globi – The Game of Spheres*, trans. and intro. by Pauline Moffitt Watts (New York: Abaris Books, 1986).

209 Nikolaus von Kues, *Die Jagd nach Weisheit*, ed. Karl Bormann. Schriften des Nikolaus von Kues in deutscher Übersetzung, 24 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2003).

210 Morimichi Watanabe, *Nicholas of Cusa – A Companion to His Life and His Time* (see note 208), 4.

211 Werner Beierwalters, "Das Verhältnis von Philosophie und Theologie bei Nicolaus Cusanus," *Nikolaus von Kues 1401 2001: Akten des Symposions in Bernkastel-Kues vom 23. bis 26. Mai 2001*, ed. Klaus Kremer and Klaus Reinhardt. Mitteilungen und Forschungen der Cusanus-Gesellschaft, 28 (Trier: Cusanus-Institut, 2003), 65–102.

logical interpretation.²¹² Although everything seems to be uneven in this game, that is, in this life, the faithful is encouraged to find his/her way toward God, like any other pilgrim, although there is always a surprise effect included, differently than in some of the great medieval and early modern pilgrimage narratives such as in Guillaume de Deguileville's fourteenth-century treatises *Le Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine*, *Le Pèlerinage de l'âme*, and *Le Pèlerinage de Jhesucrist*, in Dante's *Divina Commedia* (ca. 1320), and in Edmund Spenser's *Fairie Queene* (1590 and 1596).²¹³ Nicholas explicitly worked with the idea of a ball that was not completely even, which allowed him to operate with the element of randomness, as in all games, or as in life.²¹⁴ As Kurt Flasch has poignantly formulated, "Der Mittelpunkt, den wir auf schlingernden Wegen erreichen sollen, ist die Erkenntnis unseres göttlichen Ursprungs" (The center point that we are supposed to reach on wobbly paths is the realization of our divine origin), and: "Die Lebensführung kann nicht in der Herstellung einer geraden Linie zum beseligenden Mittelpunkt bestehen" (The way of life cannot consist of the establishment of a straight line toward the center point that grants blessedness).²¹⁵

Suffice it here to examine some critical aspects pertaining to Nicholas's ideas about the meaning of game per se in epistemological terms, especially because his main intention is aimed not at the game itself, and not at the mathematical-geometric features of the globe, but instead at carrying out a critical analysis of the relationship between the human individual and God. In the introduction to the first part where he engages with John, Duke of Bavaria, he makes

212 Reinhold F. Gleis, "Konkav und konvex: Die Spiegelkugel in Nikolaus von Kues' *De ludo globi*," *Mitteilungen und Forschungsbeiträge der Cusanus-Gesellschaft* 34 (2016): 261–85; here 267.

213 I have discussed at length the concept of pilgrimage and the notion of travel in medieval and early modern literature and religion in the introduction to *Travel, Time, and Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time: Explorations of World Perceptions and Processes of Identity Formation*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 22 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 1–75.

214 Agnes Heller, "The Metaphor of the Throw in Nicholas of Cusa's *Game of Spheres*," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 33.2 (2012): 473–90; see also the bibliographical overview in Gleis, "Konkav und konvex" (see note 212), 268–69. For a more theoretical discussion of randomness in games, such as with dice and playing cards, both in antiquity and the late Middle Ages, see the contribution to this volume by Michael A. Conrad.

215 Kurt Flasch, *Nikolaus von Kues: Geschichte einer Entwicklung. Vorlesungen zur Einführung in seine Philosophie* (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1998), 578 and 579. See also the contributions to *Der Gottes-Gedanke des Nikolaus von Kues: Akten des Symposiums in Trier vom 21. bis 23. Oktober 2010*, ed. Walter Andreas Euler. *Mitteilungen und Forschungsbeiträge der Cusanus-Gesellschaft*, 33 (Trier: Paulinus, 2012); and *Handbuch Nikolaus von Kues: Leben und Werk*, ed. Marco Brösch, Walter Andreas Euler, et al. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2014).

abundantly clear that he is looking for the instruments and games (“instrumenta et ludos,” 2) relevant for all sciences and all human activities. Playing with the globe hence makes it possible for him to explain the philosophy behind human endeavors, as reflected by the game (2).

In essence, the globe serves Nicholas to identify the properties of God’s power and the interaction between Him (perfect ball/globe) and all creation (indented, imperfect ball).²¹⁶ From his geometric reflections follow theological meditations, but in that process he proves to be most erudite in his examination of the relationship between points and the globe, curvature, and lines. He comments, for instance, that only those objects can be seen that are based on physical matter. Curvature itself, however, cannot be detected in matter because it is only an image of truth: “sed veritatis tantum imago” (10). Just as much as point and line are correlated in a globe, so the human being is correlated with God (20). In analogy, Nicholas emphasizes that the globe is incessantly in movement, driven by God’s power (being actually identical with God), and by analogy the soul is in motion and drives the body (22).

This then leads to reflections on the substantial (soul) and the accidental (material body), insofar as the former is constantly driven forward, whereas the latter can come to a rest (24). All this, however, finds its expression in the game with the globe, or the “ludu[s] sapientiae” (32; game of wisdom) insofar as the soul as being life can be defined as reflection, or thinking: “cogito, considero et determino, quid aliud fit quam quod rationalis spiritus, qui est vis cogitiva” (34; I think, consider, and determine what will happen, which is not the power of the spirit, which is the cognitive power). Ultimately, then, for Nicholas the game with the globe, or the game itself, is the result of his intellectual abilities that determine his human nature (36). Playing the game constitutes the enactment of God’s creation insofar as God’s eternal world is mirrored in the material, universal world of creation (46).

Nicholas returns, however, to his concrete game metaphor and explains specifically how he conceived of the game of throwing a globe, or a ball with the aim to reach as perfectly as possible, the center of a circle. And there rests, as he explains, Christ, and the rolling of the globe represents human life toward God

216 Glei, “Konkav und konvex” (see note 211), 279. See also Walter Haug, “Das Kugelspiel des Nicolaus Cusanus und die Poetik der Renaissance,” *Daphnis* 15 (1986): 357–74; Martin Thurner, “Theologische Unendlichkeitsspekulationen als endlicher Weltentwurf: Der menschliche Selbstvollzug im Aenigma des Globusspiels bei Nikolaus von Kues,” *Mitteilungen und Forschungsbeiträge der Cusanus-Gesellschaft* 27 (2000): 81–128; Anke Eisenkopf, “Mensch, Bewegung und Zeit im Globusspiel des Nikolaus von Kues,” *Litterae Cusanae* 3.2 (2003): 49–60; the literature on this topic is legion.

(54). The goal thus consists of the concrete operation as in any ordinary game, but it is here spiritualized and metaphorized to explain the individual's efforts to find God:

Haec est summa mysteriorum huius ludi, ut discamus has inclinationes et naturales incurvationes taliter rectificare virtuoso exercitio, ut tandem post multas variationes et instabiles circulationes et incurvationes quiescamus in regno vitae. (58)

[This is the sum of the secrets behind this game that we are supposed to learn to control through virtuous exercise those inclinations and natural curvatures in such a way that we come to rest in the kingdom of life after many variations and unstable circulations and curvatures.]

Considering the nature of virtues and vices and the human, Nicholas concludes that the globe, which has a heavy body and a side turned toward the ground, equals the human being here on earth in its pilgrimage toward God, especially because the globe receives its drive from the individual player (64). In that game, however, considering the roundness of the globe, all human actions are contingent and unstable, never pursuing a straight path “propter terrestritatem” (64; because of being earth-bound). Accordingly, playing a game constitutes life in physical and in spiritual terms because it enables the player to understand creation and hence God Himself.²¹⁷ Playing this game makes it possible for the individual to gain an epiphanic comprehension of the ineffable, as David Albertson recently pointed out in his study of Nicholas's treatise.²¹⁸

Literature as Entertainment

While some literary texts serve explicit didactic and philosophical purposes, most literary texts, both in the pre-modern and the modern world, have contrib-

217 See also the contributions to *Nikolaus von Kues*, ed. Klaus Jacobi (Freiburg i. Br. and Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 1979); Hans Gerhard Senger, *Ludus sapientiae: Studien zum Werk und zur Wirkungsgeschichte des Nikolaus von Kues*. Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 78 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2002); Giovanni Gusmini, *L'uomo nel mistero di Cristo: l'antropologia teologica nelle opere di Niccolò Cusano (1401–1464)*. Dissertatio, 49 (Rome: Pontificio seminario lombardo, 2012); Christiane Maria Bacher, *Philosophische Waagschalen: experimentelle Mystik bei Nikolaus von Kues mit Blick auf die Moderne*. Texte und Studien zur europäischen Geistesgeschichte: Reihe B, 11 (Münster: Aschendorff, 2015).

218 David Albertson, “Mapping the Space of God: Mystical *Weltbilder* in Nicholas of Cusa and the Structure of ‘De ludo globi’ (1463),” *Weltbilder im Mittelalter: Perceptions of the World in the Middle Ages*, ed. Philipp Billon (Bonn: Bernstein-Verlag, 2009), 61–82.

uted specifically to public and private entertainment. The situation in the early Middle Ages seems to be quite different, considering the strong emphasis on moralizing, religious, historical, and didactic themes, but the twelfth century actually witnessed the rise of fictionality, directly and explicitly addressing a courtly audience offering tales of love, war, death, heroism, glory, honor, defeat, triumph, and personal accomplishments. Nevertheless, in the Old-English *Beowulf*, we observe much merriment and feasting already before Grendel's attack and then after the protagonist's enormous achievements.²¹⁹ The anonymous poet of the *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200) introduces his heroic poem in the following way:

Uns ist in alten mæren wonders vil geseit
von helden lobebæren, von grôzer arebeit,
von frôuden, hôchgezîten, von weinen und von klagen,
von küener recken strîten muget ir nu wunder hoeren sagen.²²⁰

[In the stories from long ago we have heard about amazing events,
of praiseworthy heroes, of great struggles,
of joys, happy times, of crying and lamenting.
Indeed, you will now hear astounding news about the fighting of bold warriors.]

The poet is clearly driven by the impetus to provide exciting news about past events and unparalleled individuals whose actions and behavior once led to catastrophic outcomes. There still would have been didactic intentions and moral teachings, but the element of excitement stands in the foreground.²²¹ This can be confirmed through countless other examples within the world of Ar-

219 *The Beowulf Manuscript: Complete Texts and The Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. and trans. by R. D. Fulk. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 3 (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2010); see Hugh Magennis, *Images of Community in Old English Poetry*. Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 18 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

220 *Das Nibelungenlied*. Nach der Ausgabe von Karl Bartsch herausgegeben von Helmut de Boor. 22nd rev. and expanded ed. by Roswitha Wisniewski. Deutsche Klassiker des Mittelalters (Wiesbaden: Heinrich Albert Verlag, 1996), stanza 1. See also *Das Nibelungenlied: Mittelhochdeutsch/Neuhochdeutsch*. Nach der Handschrift B herausgegeben von Ursula Schulze. Ins Neuhochdeutsche übersetzt und kommentiert von Siegfried Grosse (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun. [2010]). The number of relevant studies on this poem is legion, but there is no room here to engage with the research literature for obvious reasons. There are very good English translations available, but here I rely on my own.

221 Walter Haug, *Literaturtheorie im deutschen Mittelalter: von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), 118–30, et passim; id. *Die Wahrheit der Fiktion: Studien zur weltlichen und geistlichen Literatur des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2003); for French medieval literature, see Doug Kelly, *The Art of Medieval French Romance* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

thurian literature. Most impressive, and yet again somewhat differently, proves to be, at least for our purposes, one passage in Hartmann von Aue's *Iwein* (ca. 1190/1200) where the protagonist comes across an elderly couple happily spending their leisure time in a garden, entertained by their daughter who is reading to them from a courtly romance in French:

und vor in beiden saz ein maget,
 diu vil wol, ist mir gesaget,
 wälisch lesen kunde:
 diu kurzte in die stunde.
 ouch mohte sî ein lachen
 vil lihte an in gemachen:
 ez dûhte sî guot swaz sî las,
 wand sî ir beider tohter was. (6455–62)

[in front of them a young woman was sitting
 who, as I have been told,
 could read well French;
 she shortened them their time.
 She could also make them laugh
 without much effort.
 They considered it good what she read to them,
 because she was their daughter.]

The poet emphasizes, in short, that reading out loud was a welcome and pleasant activity, giving much credit to the girl who can thus demonstrate her linguistic skills to her parents, who obviously also understand French well. The entire situation is presented as an ideal setting where the daughter can display all of her education, her virtues ("kiusche tugent," 6466), kindness and wisdom (6467). The old couple and their young daughter thereby form a harmonious company where the quiet entertainment can be enjoyed by everyone.²²²

222 Hartmann von Aue, *Iwein* (see note 11); see also Martina Backes, *Fremde Historien: Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungs- und Rezeptionsgeschichte französischer Erzählstoffe im deutschen Spätmittelalter*. Hermaea. Germanistische Forschungen, Neue Folge, 103 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2004), 51. She emphasizes that in Hartmann's model, Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain*, the formulation is quite different. There the young woman reads "An un romanz, ne sai de cui" (5366; a romance, I do not know about whom), whereas Hartmann has her read from a text in French, that is, in a foreign, courtly language. Backes offers additional examples in Middle High German literature where reading constitutes an important part of courtly entertainment, mostly after the dinner (51–52).

Late Medieval Verse Narratives: A Platform for Group Entertainment

Subsequently, I would like to turn to another literary genre where the issue comes to the foreground perhaps even more poignantly, that is, late medieval short verse narratives (*fabliaux*, *mæren*, *novelle*, *tales*, *facetiae*, etc.) that were explicitly composed for the intention to convey teaching and entertainment.²²³ The classical Horatian formula of “prodesse et delectare” unmistakably illustrates how much the individual listener or reader is invited to combine the pleasure of the literary presentation and the learning of the messages, as Glending Olson has observed already.²²⁴

While the thirteenth-century *fabliaux* were not framed as extradiegetically as the tales in Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (ca. 1350) or in Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* (ca. 1400), they certainly addressed the fundamental need to laugh about human failures, shortcomings, misbehavior, as well as smartness, wittiness, and intelligence. Here we encounter, most vividly formulated, specific strategies to provide literary diversion in a didactic context, though the latter element

223 For the German tradition of *mære*, see Hanns Fischer, *Die deutsche Märendichtung des 15. Jahrhunderts*. Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 12 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1966); Hanns Fischer, *Studien zur deutschen Märendichtung*. 2nd ed. by Johannes Janota (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1983); Karl-Heinz Schirmer, ed. *Das Mære: Die mittelhochdeutsche Versnovelle des späteren Mittelalters*. Wege der Forschung, 558 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1983); Hans-Joachim Ziegeler, *Erzählen im Spätmittelalter. Mären im Kontext von Minnereden, Bispeln und Romanen*. Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 87 (Munich and Zürich: Artemis, 1985); Joachim Heinze, “Kleine Anleitung zum Gebrauch des Märenbegriffs,” Klaus Grubmüller; Leslie Peter Johnson; Hans-Hugo Steinhoff, ed., *Kleinere Erzählformen im Mittelalter: Paderborner Colloquium 1987*. Schriften der Universitäts-Gesamthochschule-Paderborn, 10 (Paderborn and Munich: Schöningh, 1988), 45–48. For a solid text selection, see *Novellistik des Mittelalters: Märendichtung*, ed., trans., and commentary by Klaus Grubmüller. Bibliothek des Mittelalters, 23 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1996). Klaus Grubmüller, *Die Ordnung, der Witz und das Chaos: Eine Geschichte der europäischen Novellistik im Mittelalter: Fabliau – Mære – Novelle* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2006); see now also my English translations, *Erotic Tales of Medieval Germany*. Selected and trans. Albrecht Classen. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 328 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007, rev. and expanded sec. ed., 2009).

224 Glending Olson, *Literature as Recreation in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982); for the literary scene in the early and high Middle Ages, see Dennis Howard Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading: The Primary Reception of German Literature, 800–1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). However, Green is more interested in the mode of reception of literary texts.

tends to be more hidden than in religious texts. After all, travelers had much empty time on their hands and enjoyed listening to the hilarious and/or instructive accounts. This tradition continued throughout time, whether we think of Poggio Bracciolini's (1380–1459) *Facetiae* or Marguerite de Navarre's (1492–1549) *Heptaméron* (1558/1559).²²⁵ Each individual collection carried, of course, specific intentions, and has been discussed already from many different perspectives. Here, the question focuses more on the poets' purposes in providing entertainment and instruction, very much in line with Horace's teachings, to cover time while traveling. In the following centuries the interest in playing games through rhetorical exchanges, especially at court and in urban centers increased, as documented, for instance, by Georg Philipp Harsdörffer's *Frauenzimmer-Gesprechspiele* (Women's Games with Conversations) from 1644 to 1649.²²⁶ The emergence of the literary salon in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was then a logical consequence from the phenomenon of the reading or story-telling circles in the late Middle Ages, and this across Europe and elsewhere.²²⁷ Despite big differences in the social-historical context, here we identify specific forms of

225 There is much research on this pan-European genre; see Robert J. Clements and Joseph Gibaldi, *Anatomy of the Novella: The European Tale Collection from Boccaccio and Chaucer to Cervantes* (New York: New York University Press, 1977); Klaus Grubmüller, *Die Ordnung, der Witz und das Chaos: Eine Geschichte der europäischen Novellistik im Mittelalter: Fabliau – Märe – Novelle* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2006); Albrecht Classen, "Gender Conflicts, Miscommunication, and Communicative Communities in the Late Middle Ages: The Evidence of Fifteenth-Century German Verse Narratives," *Speaking in the Medieval World*, ed. Jean Godsall-Myers. Cultures, Beliefs and Traditions, 16 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 65–92.

226 Georg Philipp Harsdörffer, *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele: so bey Ehr- und Tugendliebenden Gesellschaften, mit nützlicher Ergetzlichkeit, beliebter und geübet werden mögen ... Aus Italiänischen, Frantzösischen und Spanischen Scribenten angewiesen ...* 8 vols. (Nuremberg: Endter, 1644–1649). This topic was apparently of international relevance, and we can identify here an even advanced form of game/play for the purpose of pleasure and leisure in an intellectual, rhetorical fashion, specifically geared toward a female audience. Game and pleasure are realized by way of story telling, listening, inventing, composing, and other activities.

227 Amy Prendergast, *Literary Salons Across Britain and Ireland in the Long Eighteenth Century*. Palgrave Studies in the Enlightenment, Romanticism and the Cultures of Print (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Louis C. Keating, *Studies on the Literary Salon in France 1550–1615*. Harvard Studies in Romance Languages, 16 (1941; New York: Kraus Repr., 1969); Christa Bürger, *Leben Schreiben: die Klassik, die Romantik und der Ort der Frauen; [Bettina von Armin, Charlotte von Kalb, Sophie Mereau, Caroline Schlegel, Johanna Schopenhauer, Rahel Varnhagen]* (Königstein im Taunus: Helmer, 2001). For French salons, see Steven Kale, *French Salons: High Society and Political Sociability from the Old Regime to the Revolution of 1848* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); see also Dena Goodman, "Enlightenment Salons: The Convergence of Female and Philosophic Ambitions," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 22.3, Special Issue: *The French Revolution in Culture* (Spring, 1989): 329–50.

intellectual entertainment bringing a select group of individuals together. Communal reading or making music highlight this phenomenon, which is the case already in the high and late Middle Ages. I would go so far as to draw connections between the highly cultured courts in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and modern literary salons since both institutions mirror the way that elite social groups pursued their own pleasure and leisure.

Boccaccio's *Decameron*

Boccaccio, however, set a unique tone by placing his narrators in the peculiar situation of pest-plagued Florence where massive dying has set in, making it even impossible to bury all the dead (which might have been a poetic exaggeration). Seven young noble ladies and three noble men form a group and leave the city to spend ten days far away from the danger represented by the epidemic. Every day they move to another estate and spend their free time regaling each other with entertaining narratives. While *Decameron* belongs to world literature and has been discussed already countless times, here it is necessary to highlight and bring to our attention how much narration itself served as the principal platform for aristocratic and urban society to find pleasure and leisure.²²⁸

Boccaccio's enormous popularity over the next centuries, documented both by ever new editions and by translations and adaptations (Chaucer, Marguerite de Navarre, Hans Wilhelm Kirchhof, Hans Sachs, William Shakespeare, Miguel de Cervantes, Jonathan Swift, etc.) signals that his literary approach served exceedingly well for late medieval and early modern audiences to mirror themselves and thus to gain instruction and entertainment through the speech act in fictional form.²²⁹ Of course, this might almost be considered a platitude be-

228 Giuseppe Mazzotta, *The World at Play in Boccaccio's Decameron* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986); Pier Massimo, *Adventures in Speech: Rhetoric and Narration in Boccaccio's Decameron*. Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996); Alessandro Archangeli, *Recreation in the Renaissance: Attitudes Towards Leisure and Pastimes in European Culture, c. 1425–1675* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

229 William Robins, "The Case of the Court Entertainer: Popular Culture, Intertextual Dialogue, and the Early Circulation of Boccaccio's *Decameron*," *Speculum* 92.1 (2017): 1–35, investigates the phenomenon of the *uomini di corte*, that is, entertainers, jokers, artists, musicians, but mostly men of wit and high narrative skills who were employed at court festivals for the general delight of all attendees. He discusses four texts where such *uomini* appear and are treated with great care, either critically or with approval, that is, Dante's *Inferno* (16), Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1.8), Antonio Pucci's *Libro di varie storie* (37.38–39), and Franco Sacchetti's *Trecentonovelle* (153.9). While Dante and Pucci viewed those court entertainers with great suspicion and identi-

cause all literary texts, both in antiquity and in the early Middle Ages, for instance, pursued this fundamental goal, combined with many others (instruction, education, warning against transgressions, inspiring, etc.). By contrast, we might want to go so far as to claim that poorly composed texts make available only one game, which the author/poet plays with the audience, and then fails to invite the individual reader/listener to figure out alternatives, ideals, challenges, and critical issues, as is the case, by contrast, in the various works by Boccaccio, Chaucer, Kaufringer, Franco Sacchetti, Poggio Bracciolini, and Marguerite de Navarre, to name just some of the most famous contributors to the vast genre of short verse and later short prose narratives.²³⁰

However, the real tradition of the art of narration, relying on the short verse or prose form, beginning with major collections such as the anonymous *Gesta Romanorum* or Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus miraculorum*, set in only with the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In this context, Boccaccio's *Decameron* can easily be identified as the first major crystallization point in this long tradition,²³¹ shedding more light on the central function of literary entertainment both for the usual courtly, but then also for the urban audiences in

fied them as representatives of a declining courtly world, Boccaccio was rather sympathetic to them because with the help of their wit and ethical ideals they could correct wrong behavior and reinstall true courtly values. As to Boccaccio, Robins concludes: "Boccaccio thereby highlights the performative tradition over which *uomini di Corte* presided (a tradition torn between aristocratically appropriate refinement, on the one hand, and oppositional scurrility, on the other) and signals his own ambivalence about the connections between this tradition and his own novelistic enterprise" (28). See also the contributions to *Giovanni Boccaccio: Italienisch-deutscher Kulturtransfer von der Frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Ingrid Bennewitz. Bamberger interdisziplinäre Mittelalterstudien, 9 (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2015); Richard Kuhns, *Decameron and the Philosophy of Storytelling: Author as Midwife and Pimp* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

230 *Literatur am Rand: Perspektiven der Trivialliteratur vom Mittelalter bis zum 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Eva Parra-Membrives. Popular Fiction Studies, 1 (Tübingen: Narr Verlag, 2013). However, the topic of game does not surface here in the context as pursued in the present study. As to the larger genre, see the contributions to *Mittelalterliche Novellistik im europäischen Kontext: kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven*, ed. Mark Chinca. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, 13 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2006). As to the specific play with gender roles and norms in that genre, see Andrea Schallenberg, *Spiel mit Grenzen: zur Geschlechterdifferenz in mittelhochdeutschen Verserzählungen*. Deutsche Literatur: Studien und Quellen, 7 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012).

231 Judith Serafini-Saull, "The Pleasures of Reading: Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Female Literacy," *Modern Language Notes* 126.1 (2011): 29–46; Juan Ramón Muñoz Sánchez, "'Le quali cose ciascuna per sé e tutte insieme' / 'Así de todas juntas como de cada de una de por sí': From the *Decameron* by Boccaccio to the Exemplary Novels by Cervantes," *Anales Cervantinos* 45 (2013): 175–216.

Italy and abroad.²³² Let us briefly consider how Boccaccio as the narrator explains his own position and the purpose of his writing, although those aspects have been discussed already many times in different contexts.²³³

Drawing from his experiences as a woeful lover who needs consolation and distraction from his emotional suffering, he dedicates his collection of tales to women, above all because they are, due to their submissive position within a patriarchal society, in greatest need to gain some relief from their distress resulting from their experiences of love. Boccaccio fully recognizes that women hold strong feelings, and yet are not in any good position to live them out or to deal with them constructively because the male family members make this impossible for them. Since young women were socially forced to refrain from an active life, these stories and the resulting entertainment promise those young people to alleviate their boredom and isolation:

Essi, se alcuna malinconia o gravezza di pensieri gli affligge, hanno molti modi da alleggiare o da passar quello, per ciò che a loro, volendo essi, non manca l'andare a torno, udire e veder molte cose, uccellare, cacellare, cucciare, pescare, cavalcare, giucare o mercatare: de' quali modi ciascuno ha forza di trarre, o in tutto o in parte, l'animo a sé e dal noioso pensiero rimuoverlo almeno per alcuno spazio di tempo, appresso il quale, con un modo o con altro, o consolazion sopravviene o diventa la noia minore. (8)

[They, if they are afflicted by a melancholy and heaviness of mood, have many ways of relief and diversion; they may go where they will, may hear and see many things, may hawk, hunt, fish, ride, play, or traffic. By which means all are able to compose their minds, either in whole or in part, and repair the ravage wrought by the dumpish mood, at least for some space of time; and shortly after, by one way or another, either solace ensues, or the dumps become less grievous.]

Yet, many noble women are still in need of further entertainment, especially those who are in love and cannot realize it. For those, above all, Boccaccio offers his collection of short narratives. In the first place, those are supposed to grant

232 Lance K. Donaldson-Evans, "The Narrative of Desire: Boccaccio and the French *Decamerons* of the 15th and 16th Centuries," *Neophilologus* 77.4 (1993): 541–52.

233 Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron. Filocolo. Ameto. Fiammetta*, ed. Enrico Bianchi, Carlo Salinari, and Natalino Sapegno. La Letteratura Italiana. Storia e Testi, 8 (Milan: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1952); id., *Decameron*, ed. Vittore Branca. Sixth rev. and corrected ed. (1980; Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1987). There are other good editions as well, but here I quote from Branca's. For an excellent online platform with a text edition, translation (by J. M. Rigg, 1903, which is still one of the best despite its antiquated language), commentary, etc., see http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/dweb/ (last accessed on June 28, 2018). I will use the English translation offered there. See also Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. with an intro. and notes by G. H. McWilliam. Sec. ed. (1972; London: Penguin, 1995).

entertainment because they relay humorous situations in ordinary life associated with love (“piacevoli e aspri casi d’amore,” 9) and talk about unusual adventures (“fortunati avvenimenti,” 9) that some individuals experienced, often to their own embarrassment or that of others. The narrator hopes that his accounts will provide entertainment and good advice: “purimenti diletto delle sollazzevoli cose in quelle mostrate e utile consiglio” (9; “may derive both pleasure from the entertaining matters set forth therein, and also good counsel”). Reading or listening to *Decameron* would assist in chasing away the ordinary boredom or bad mood which is necessary before one can make good choices: “... e conoscere quello che sia da fuggire e che sia similmente da seguire: le quali cose senza passamento: di noia non credo che possano intervenire” (9; “in that they may learn what to shun, and likewise what to pursue. Which cannot, I believe, come to pass unless the dumps be banished by diversion of mind”).

However, in the introduction to the first day, the narrator depicts a very different scenario, discussing the catastrophic consequences of the Black Death on the population of Florence, where many basic values and ideals were lost or simply ignored because in the face of imminent death numerous people devoted themselves to excessive pleasures and leisure activities. The situation with the company of seven ladies and then the three men needs to be considered in order to understand their decision to leave the city and to find refuge in the countryside on one of their estates in a rotation system. Once they have agreed on how to pass their time during those ten days, they leisurely ambulate through the park until an appointed moment when they reunite and settle down for their meal. The *Decameron* thus turns into a fictional platform for aristocratic society on how to perform privately and publicly, and how to combine the useful with the pleasurable, very much in the tradition of the Horatian principle of “prodesse et delectare.”

The narrator gives us detailed information about their entertainment, such as binding wreaths from flowers, singing love songs, playing music instruments, dancing, and playing board games and chess: “tavolieri e scacchieri” (47). The latter, however, always bring about the loss of one of the players, leading to considerable disappointment and frustration by one party (47). Hence, Pampinea, the ‘queen of the day,’ suggests turning to story telling which would allow everyone to enjoy the event: “novellando ... a tutta la compagnia che ascolta diletto” (47; “in telling of stories, in which the invention of one may afford solace to all the company of his hearers”). In other words, narratives involve everyone and allow them to engage together, maybe even on a more or less equal footing, offering women, above all, a better chance to demonstrate their skills and intelli-

gence.²³⁴ Wisdom, entertainment, debate, critical reflections, and moral and religious meditation merge here rather harmoniously and highlight the more esoteric and sophisticated dimension of pleasure and leisure, as Timothy Kircher has already indicated.²³⁵

Entertainment and Leisure for Widows: Felix Fabri's Comments

The famous Dominican preacher, pilgrim, and author, Felix Fabri (1441–1502) composed several very illuminating pilgrimage accounts, both predicated on his own experiences (*Evagatorium in Terre Sancte peregrinationem*), as I have discussed above, and projected as a virtual travel experience for nuns (*Sionpilger*).²³⁶ He also addressed a female audience consisting of widows, in his treatise on their expected lifestyle (*Von witwelichem stät*). This was based on a Latin text by the Nuremberg cleric Johannes Prausser (d. after 1481). Here we find also a significant discussion of how widows should seek entertainment without creating any scandals or rumors about their 'sinful' behavior.

So, he advises that when they go on short excursions outside of the city, they should not leave the path and damage the fields. When they suffer from boredom, they should not go for walks, participate in hunting, fishing, or hunting with falcons. They should avoid frequenting markets and other public spaces; they should move around demurely and quietly, as Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153) had already recommended. They should not provide advice to friends because those would then regularly return for more help and thus disturb the widows' chaste and calm life. Further, they should not pay too much attention to their friends' children because that could draw them too much into public life. Fabri also comments that many widows hold pets, such as monkeys, birds, dogs, cats, or squirrels, but he regards all this as a costly waste of money and time. Instead, widows should read the Bible and meditate on their own lives,

234 Valerio Ferme, *Women, Enjoyment, and the Defense of Virtue in Boccaccio's Decameron*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); see also the contributions to "*Umana cosa è aver compassione degli afflitti*": raccontare, consolare, curare nella narrative europea da Boccaccio al Seicento. Special issue of *Levia Gravia: quaderno annuale di letteratura italiana* (Alessandria: Ed. dell' Orso, 2015).

235 Timothy Kircher, *The Poet's Wisdom: The Humanists, the Church, and the Formation of Philosophy in the Early Renaissance*. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 133 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006).

236 Albrecht Classen, "Imaginary Experience of the Divine" (see note 61 above).

on martyrs and saints. It remains unclear, however, how those lonely women should really gain some joy in life; nevertheless, Fabri's negative remarks shed important light on the actual forms of pleasures and leisure pursued by widows in late medieval cities.²³⁷

The Narrative Genius of Georg Wickram, the Early Modern Literary Gambler

To illustrate this more in detail, and to introduce a relevant text which has not yet attracted sufficient attention by non-Germanic research, I will briefly examine the specific arguments developed by the Colmar poet Georg/Jörg Wickram in his *Rollwagenbüchlein* from 1555. This collection represents, in its thematic orientation, everyday cultural perspectives, ideals and values prevalent both in the Middle Ages and the early modern age, and it was also popular in the later centuries, as the seventeen editions of this work from the time between 1555 and 1613 and then also from 1654 indicate.²³⁸

Although Wickram keeps his prologue very short, here we face specific comments about the intended purposes and hence an abbreviated theoretical basis for his writing. As he emphasizes explicitly, with his entertaining tales, contained in a "schlecht und unachtbares Buechlein" (5; a simple and not noteworthy little

237 Britta-Juliane Kruse, "Felix Fabris Witwenbuch: Themen des Witwendiskurses im späten 15. Jahrhundert," *Die Welt des Frater Felix Fabri*, ed. Folker Reichert and Alexander Rosenstock (Weißenhorn, Bavaria: Anton H. Konrad Verlag, 2018), 149–71; here 167. There are some interesting overlapping comments in this widows' manual and his remarks about the proper way how pilgrims should spend their time during the voyage to the Holy Land; see above, and notes 55 and 56.

238 Georg Wickram, *Das Rollwagenbüchlein*, ed. Hans-Gert Roloff. Ausgaben deutscher Literatur des XV. bis XVIII. Jahrhunderts. Vol. 7 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973), 315; see also the catalogue *Verzeichnis der Drucke des 17. Jahrhunderts*, online at <http://gso.gbv.de/DB=1.28/SET=1/TTL=1/NXT?FRST=11> (last accessed on June 27, 2018). Albrecht Classen, "Witz, Humor, Satire. Georg Wickrams *Rollwagenbüchlein* als Quelle für sozialhistorische und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Studien zum 16. Jahrhundert. Oder: Vom kommunikativen und gewalttätigen Umgang der Menschen in der Frühen Neuzeit," *Jahrbuch für ungarische Germanistik* (1999; appeared in 2000): 13–30; see now the contributions to *Vergessene Texte – verstellte Blicke: neue Perspektiven der Wickram-Forschung*, ed. Maria E. Müller (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2007); Nikola Roßbach, *Lust und Nutz: historische, geistliche, mathematische und poetische Erquickstunden in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2015); Gudrun Bamberger, *Poetologie im Prosaroman: Fortunatus-Wickram-Faustbuch*. Poetik und Episteme, 2 (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2018).

book – unmistakably a humility topos!), his intention was to provide “guoter kurtzweil” (5; good entertainment), and not to offer teachings or instructions: “underweysung noch leer” (5; sic).²³⁹ Further, Wickram does not want anyone to feel criticized or ridiculed. Instead, his primary purpose consists of creating literary entertainment: “mit disem buochlin zuo ergetzen” (5; to entertain with this little book). The poet aims at creating “guoten schwencken und kurtzweilige[] bossen” (5; good jest narratives and facetious jokes). His readers, as he hopes, would accept these short stories with “guotem hertzen und gemuot” (5; good heart and mind). Wickram is unmistakably concerned to appease his audience and to avoid any possible conflict with the patrons, although the subsequent stories are all predicated on satire, irony, sarcasm, and humor reflecting many human shortcomings at all levels of human society.

Addressing his readers, Wickram insists that too many people resort to too many bad and crude jokes and insult particularly women’s sensitivities while traveling in company. He realizes, however, the significant need to keep people entertained while they go traveling, so his collection of tales is supposed to present a “kurtzweiligs Buechlin ... in welchem ir nit wenig kurtzweilig und schimpfliche schwenck vernemmen werden / in welchen sich niemants ergeren wirt” (7; an entertaining little book containing humorous and funny stories through which no one will feel insulted). Of course, as a satirist, which would be a modern but appropriate term for Wickram, he knows only too well that there cannot be any joke without someone being ridiculed for his or her wrongdoing or failure. Hence, he recommends that those who recognize themselves in one of those stories should show a positive face and keep quiet; otherwise the other people in the audience would realize quickly the true target of the poet’s intention (7). He concludes his address with the proverbial statement: “Wenn man under die hund wirfft / schreit keiner dann welcher getroffen wirt” (7; When you throw a [rock] at the dogs, none will bark that will not be hit).

Wickram’s tales primarily focus either on foolish individuals or witty comments, and they regularly expose social shortcomings, ignorance, even stupidity, arrogance, and they also illustrate how smart, witty, and intelligent individuals know how to fool others and take advantage of them. Many times the butt of the jokes are peasants, simple-minded women, uneducated priests, lansquenets, but then also smart students, violent husbands, and children. One example stands out because of its gruesomeness, but it illustrates dramatically what this collection of tales intends to achieve, providing entertainment, excitement, laughter,

²³⁹ To avoid typographic errors in the final stage of printing, I simply write out the superscripta that substitute for normal *umlaute*.

but then also accounts of unique situations that require the audience to reflect on fundamental human conditions.

In the tale “Von einen Kind / das kindtlicher weis ein ander Kind umbbringt” (no. 74), a group of young children at the age of five and six years imitate their rural society by acting out individual roles. One is a cook, the other is a butcher, and one is a pig. They all plan on creating a scene in the butchery, so the ‘butcher’ in fact cuts the ‘pig’s throat, and the ‘cook’ catches the blood to make sausages from it. In that moment a member of the city council comes by and witnesses this horrible scene, and takes the ‘murderer’ with him to the council. However, no one knows how to judge this case because they are all small children. One wise old man then advises the supreme judge to test the child and to offer it a delicious apple in one hand and a gold coin in the other. The child is allowed to choose only one of them, and since it happily takes the apple, not yet understanding the value of money, it is freed from the charge of murder because it is really only a child (141). Although there is no epimythium, or final comment, we can clearly recognize that all members of society, or of a traveling group, are invited to debate this situation and to reflect on the fundamentals of justice and law, and how children fit into that.

As terrible as the situation proves to be, Wickram offers significant entertainment without condemning anyone. The story proves to be shocking, of course, but it provides intriguing insights into fundamental legal issues, identifying true sinfulness or crimes with intention. Since the child did not understand at all the consequences of its action, it was found to be not guilty despite having killed its playmate. The narrator simply relates this event in order to thrill his audience and to provide material for further discussion. Here we encounter simple and straightforward entertainment, offering pleasure within a leisure situation.

It would also be worth including reflections on late medieval poetry where the art of singing gains theoretical traction, such as in the case of the highly prolific poet Michel Beheim (1420–ca. 1472), whom we could identify as a professional singer finding constantly changing employment at the various courts in Germany, Hungary, Austria, and Denmark (to use modern names). He composed a number of songs in which he treats the question of who among the various composers would deserve to be recognized as a true artist and who should be expelled from the courts. In his songs “ain exempel von tarichten singern, dy sich vil kunst an nemen und nicht kunnen” (no. 418; An example of foolish singers who claim to know much artistry and yet do not know it), “aber ain exempel von kunstlasen singern” (no. 419; Another example of unskilled singers), and “mer ains von toechten singern” (no. 420; Furthermore, a poem about foolish singers). Beheim intensively engages with his competitors and tries to carve out a

concrete prescription of what would define a truly qualified singer.²⁴⁰ While the details would not matter here, his songs underscore explicitly how much public performance of songs constituted an essential part of courtly life, especially in the late Middle Ages. Songs, however, contributed to all leisure activities and created pleasure, which allows us, one more time, to emphasize how important the many different song collections from the Middle Ages and the early modern age prove to be for the study of the pleasure and leisure components in pre-modern societies, whether the *Carmina Burana* or the *Heidelberger Liederbuch*.²⁴¹

In sixteenth-century *Schwänke* (prose jest narratives), we often learn about people's leisure activities, especially during the evenings and the weekends, and this both in the cities and in the countryside. Michael Lindener, for instance, relates in story no. 120 in his *Katzipori* (1558) that the village priest does not observe his duties carefully enough and is entirely given over to a life of pleasures and leisure. A peasant wants to have his newborn son to be baptized, but the priest is not present in the church; instead he spends time “imm wirdshauß sasse / fraß vnd saufft / Doepplet vnd spylet / wie jr brauch ist” (190; he sat in the inn, ate and drank a lot, played card and threw dice, as is their custom).²⁴² Here we face, of course, a typical expression of anti-clericalism, but the brief comment also reveals what people normally assumed about the village priests

240 *Die Gedichte des Michel Beheim*, ed. Hans Gille and Ingeborg Spriewald. Vol. III/1. Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters, LXV/1 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1971), 184–90; cf. William C. McDonald, “Whose bread I eat”: *The Song-Poetry of Michel Beheim*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 318 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1981).

241 Albrecht Classen, *Deutsche Liederbücher des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*. Volksliedstudien, 1 (Münster, New York, et al.: Waxmann, 2001); id., together with Lukas Richter, *Lied und Liederbuch in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Volksliedstudien, 10 (Münster, New York, et al.: Waxmann, 2010); id., “Die historische Entwicklung eines literarischen Sammlungstypus. Das Liederbuch vom 14. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert – von der Weingartner Liederhandschrift bis zum Venus-Gärtlein,” “daß gepflegt werde der feste Buchstab. Festschrift Heinz Rölleke zum 65. Geburtstag am 6. November 2001, ed. Achim Hölter and Lothar Bluhm (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2001), 26–40; *Manuscripts and Medieval Song; Inscription, Performance, Context*, ed. Helen Deeming and Elizabeth Eva Leach (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); similar forms of public entertainment can be found in the world of Spanish, French, Italian, Polish, and other courtly and urban societies, as the history of European (and probably global) song poetry indicates overwhelmingly.

242 Michael Lindener, *Schwankbücher: Rastbüchlein und Katzipori*, ed. Kyra Heidemann. Vol. 1: *Texte*. Arbeiten zur Mittleren Deutschen Literatur und Sprache, 20.1 (Bern, Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 1991); there is hardly any scholarly literature on Lindener; see, for instance, Albrecht Classen, *Deutsche Schwankliteratur des 16. Jahrhunderts: Studien zu Martin Montanus, Hans Wilhelm Kirchhof und Michael Lindener*. Koblenz-Landauer Studien zu Geistes-, Kultur- und Bildungswissenschaften, 4 (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2009), 147–71.

and their desire to waste their time away in the various taverns, playing and gambling. In another narrative, an eleven-year old girl confesses to the priest her sins, that is, her strong dislike of work and her preference for “singen / springen / rennen vnd lauffen / hetzen vnd jagen” (no. 105, p. 174; singing, jumping, running, and jogging, chasing and hunting). She also proves to be extremely impertinent and disrespectful, cursing at the priest, who proves to be powerless because she knows that he had had sex with their farm maid in the cow shed. To silence him, she threatens him by telling him that her father would slay him if he ever dared to do that again. The crucial point for us, however, is not the attack against the priest, or the accusation that he broke his own vow of chastity, but that here we have an example for what kind of entertainment young girls in the countryside pursued during the sixteenth century.

Conclusion and Outlook

As we have realized so far, the notions of pleasure and leisure open many different perspectives toward the history of human society, both regarding the world of children and the world of adults. There is no doubt about the huge significance of play for all of human culture, for all age groups and both genders. While archaeologists and historians have heretofore dominated the discourse of this large topic, we have learned by now to accept that the literary discourse sheds even more light on the evaluation and appreciation of pleasure and leisure in the pre-modern world. Both secular poets and philosophers, both religious writers and didactic authors realized consistently how much human behavior and human ideals and values were regularly determined by the principles of play.

In contrast to laws, for instance, games, although they follow rules as well, are determined by regulations that do not have to be obeyed under every circumstance. In this regard, pleasure and leisure emerge as truly fundamental categories for the study of human culture and history. Playing, games, sports, and other forms of entertainment have always been of central importance, whether chroniclers or biographers reflected upon them or not.²⁴³ But, as we also have to admit, considering the testimony of Abelard or Nicholas of Cusa, play in general could

243 *Games of Empires* (see note 4); see also Birkhan, *Spielendes Mittelalter* (see note 10); Reeves, *Pleasures and Pastimes in Medieval England* (see note 67). We must keep in mind, however, that the notion of ‘pleasure’ can easily be used in a rather flippant and fluid manner, as when Reeves addresses, within this specific context, subject matters as diverse, and here rather irrelevant topics, as architecture, nature, pets, gardening, diet, religion, mysticism, and personal devotion. In this process the entire focus gets lost.

always be specified as a metaphor of human life and as such as a catalyst for the further, now ludic analysis of all our existence.

Undoubtedly, some games were specific to the world of childhood, some games were the prerogative of the knightly class, and others were commonly enjoyed by everyone, such as story-telling. Many stern critics voiced vehement opposition to all games and playing activities, such as Hugo von Trimberg (see above) and the French knight Geoffrey de la Tour Landry, who, in his treatise *Livre pour l'enseignement de ses filles* (1371–1372), warned his daughters about the dangers of female misbehavior and inappropriate activities. Others, such as the early sixteenth-century courtly author Baldassare Castiglione in his *Il Libro del Cortegiano* (first printed in 1528), emphasized the great value of games “because the ability to perform well in certain games and pastimes – both violent and social, physical and intellectual – was an important aspect of being a courtier.”²⁴⁴

In short, all leisure activities and all forms of pleasure constitute essential components of all cultural history, a topic which has already been addressed by a wide range of scholars focusing, however, mostly on the concrete objects, toys and dolls, for instance.²⁴⁵ We learn much about people's minds, values, ideals, virtues, and vices if we examine how they spent their free time and how they managed to relax, both as children and as adults. Personal enjoyment is just as relevant in epistemological terms as the topics of work, fighting, love making, serving God, and so forth. Both the ancient Romans and modern Americans have played and continue with that all over the world, and so do all other people. Pleasure and leisure, game and playing have meaning and reflect human life, both materially and spiritually, as Nicholas of Cusa most prominently indicated. Many pre-modern theological texts (sermons, penitentiaries, miracle ac-

244 Paul Milliman, “Games and Pastimes” (see note 8), 598; see also Joseph D. Falvo, *The Economy of Human Relations: Castiglione's Libro del cortegiano*. Studies in Italian Culture, 5 (New York: Peter Lang, 1992); Lawrence M. Clopper, *Drama, Play, and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

245 Walter Endrei, *Spiele und Unterhaltung im alten Europa* (Hanau: Verlag Werner Dausien, 1988). He examines the history of children's play, games based on luck, or on the principle of randomness (dice, lottery, roulette), strategic games (dice, card games, domino), tactical games (e.g., chess), social games (running and jumping, hiding, fighting games), ball games, dart games, sportive events and cultural games. See also Dorota Żołędź-Strzelczyk, Izabela Gomułka, Katarzyna Kabacińska-Luczak, Monika Nawrot-Borowska, *Dzieje zabawek dziecięcych na ziemiach polskich do pacztku XX wieku* (see note 69). For the Renaissance, see Andrew Leibs, *Sports and Games of the Renaissance* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004); see also the contributions to *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature*, ed. Serina Patterson. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

counts) are deeply determined by a general concern about people's shortcomings and vices, which come to the surface through drinking, sexual deprivations, and especially games and playing activities.²⁴⁶ However, the more those critics and commentators objected to that world of pleasures and leisure, the more their texts reveal the true extent to which those activities were widespread and commonly enjoyed.

Modern philosophical reflections on gaming (Kant, the Romantics, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Derrida, etc.) pursue more abstract notions concerning the nature of this world's structure in epistemological terms, but in essence, the questions regarding the relevance and meaning of pleasure and leisure remain the same because they aim at the fundamental human need to keep busy and to enjoy free time, and especially to find entertainment and also relevance. Nicholas of Cusa had underscored the same notion by relying heavily on the metaphor of the ball game for his theological ruminations. Both dimensions obviously interacted with each other. In game, in pleasant activities, and in physical activities the individual probes the relationship between the subjective and the objective and operates within a space determined by a certain degree of freedom.

The subsequent contributions will offer detailed perspectives and highlight special cases and conditions from the Middle Ages to the late eighteenth century, identifying the world of pleasures and leisure as undoubtedly significant aspects in pre-modern life.²⁴⁷ I am fully cognizant of the inherent danger that suddenly all forms of cultural manifestations could now be identified as entertainment, as game, or leisure activity, which would dramatically water down the focus of this volume. But we can be very specific, after all, such as when we consider the case of Tristan in Gottfried von Straßburg's eponymous romance (see above). Tristan does not always play; he is not always looking for simple pleasures, such as during the hunt, playing of chess, playing music instruments, etc. Instead, he is also involved in a deadly duel against Morolt, in a highly dangerous fight against the

246 Jennifer O'Reilly, *Studies in the Iconography of the Virtues and Vices in the Middle Ages*. Outstanding Theses in the Fine Arts from British Universities. A Garland Series (New York and London: Garland, 1988). See the contributions to *Laster im Mittelalter = Vices in the Middle Ages*, ed. Christoph Flüeler (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009).

247 Even though countless scholars have investigated the private life of pre-modern people, oddly the topics of game and leisure activities have not attracted much attention. See, for instance, the contributions to *L'uomo medievale*, ed. Jacques Le Goff. Economia Laterza, 6 (Rome and Bari: Gius. Laterza e Figli Spa, 1987). There are countless other studies of this kind, all well researched and formulated, but at closer analysis they fail to go beyond the standard level of our knowledge.

dragon in Ireland, or in teaching activities (Isolde). All those areas interact, of course, and we gain deep insights by recognizing both dimensions at first separately from and then in conjunction with each other. People are, as Huizinga famously formulated, *homini ludentes*, both in the medieval and early modern past and today. Otherwise, no religious or secular play would have ever appealed to the audiences who specifically perceive their own existence reflected in the stage performance, and yet know distinctly about the differences to reality.²⁴⁸ The carefully balanced relationship between playfulness and work, to put it bluntly, represents one of the secrets of a successful life, although I am not sure whether I can claim that for myself.

Already Michel de Montaigne formulated in his *Essays* (1580), quoting Cicero: “Also sometimes the mind must be diverted to other interests, preoccupations, cares, business; finally, it is often to be cured by a change of place, as with sick people who are slow in convalescing.”²⁴⁹ But he also warned that people are too easily sidetracked and lose sight of the really meaningful things in life because of diversion: “It takes little to divert and distract us, for it takes little to hold us. We scarcely look at things in gross and alone; it is the minute and superficial circumstances and notions that strike us, and the empty husk that peels off from the things.”²⁵⁰

The current state of research allows us to formulate the idea that the world of game and playing reflects and shapes reality, and that reality at large is mirrored in the sphere of pleasures and leisure. While Peter Schnyder still saw the need to lament the absence of solid research on both topics when he published his monograph *Alea* in 2009, drawing directly from Cailliois and focusing on early modern history,²⁵¹ we are making some progress, as best illustrated by Helmut Birkhan’s new study on game in the Middle Ages.²⁵² The present volume thus aims to address many of these issues pertaining to the pre-modern world and to pursue them not only on the level of physical objects, but also in terms of the political, religious, cultural, and ethical dimensions. Game is culture deter-

248 Catherine Bates, *Play in a Godless World: The Theory and Practice of Play in Shakespeare, Nietzsche and Freud* (London: Open Gate Press, 1999); *The Practicalities of Early English Performance: Manuscripts, Records, and Staging: Shifting Paradigms in Early English Drama Studies*, ed. Peter Meredith and John Marshall. Variorum Collected Studies Series (London: Taylor & Francis, 2018).

249 Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*, in *The Complete Works of Montaigne: Essays. Travel Journal. Letters*. Newly trans. Donald M. Frame (1943; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957), 632.

250 Montaigne, “Essays” (see note 249), 635.

251 Peter Schnyder, *Alea: Zählen und Erzählen im Zeichen des Glücksspiels 1650–1850* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009).

252 Birkhan, *Spielendes Mittelalter* (see note 10).

mining human lives, and culture often finds its expression in games. Despite the seemingly highly serious nature of that world, deeply influenced by the teachings of the Church, constantly leading to profound fear for the well-being of the soul in the afterworld,²⁵³ any closer analysis reveals that people in virtually all pre-modern societies enjoyed a good laugh, did not hesitate to ridicule foolish individuals, rituals, objects, or situations, used dirty language, scoffed at each other, played games, practiced sports, and were engaged in theatrical performances of all sorts. Riddles, jokes, witticism, irony, satire, sarcasm, and many other forms of entertainment were rather common throughout the age, which makes it much easier for us today to gain a deeper understanding of that world because human needs for pleasure and leisure were rather similar to our own.²⁵⁴

When we draw from the famous illustrated textbook, *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* (1658) by the Moravian or Czech pedagogue, John Amos Comenius (1592–1670), who had an enormous success with it all over Europe and beyond, we are in the ideal situation of discovering rich pictorial material reflecting everyday life in early modern Europe, often depicting scenes of pleasure and leisure, though then mostly in the service of education.²⁵⁵ Here the entire world is supposed

253 Peter Dinzelbacher, *Angst im Mittelalter: Teufels-, Todes- und Gotteserfahrung. Mentalitätsgeschichte und Ikonographie* (Paderborn, Munich, et al.: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1996); Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*. Conjunctions of Religions & Power in the Medieval Past (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2003).

254 Naomi Reed Kline, “Games People Play,” *The Playful Middle Ages: Meanings of Play and Plays of Meaning: Essays in Memory of Elaine C. Block*, ed. Paul Hardwick. Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, 23 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 45–59, focuses on small boxes from the late Middle Ages with highly specific images of games and scenes of social interaction between men and women, before and after marriage, carrying strongly erotic messages. As to laughter, see the contributions to *Laughter in the Middle Ages* (see note 75); as to sarcasm, see the contributions to *Words that Tear the Flesh: Essays on Sarcasm in Medieval and Early Modern Literature and Cultures*, ed. Alan Baragana and Elizabeth L. Rambo. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 21 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013); as to irony, see Gerd Althoff and Christel Meier, *Ironie im Mittelalter: Hermeneutik – Dichtung – Politik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2011); as to satire, see Ronald E. Pepin, *Literature of Satire in the Twelfth Century: A Neglected Mediaeval Genre*. Studies in Mediaeval Literature, 2 (Lewiston, NY, Queenston, Ont., and Lampeter, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1988); the latter title is unfortunately hardly ever consulted and yet deserves much more attention.

255 John Amos Comenius, *The Orbis Pictus* (Syracuse, NY: C. W. Bardeen, Publisher, 1887); this is now available in an excellent digitized version with an easy turn-the page feature, <http://www.openculture.com/2014/05/first-childrens-picture-book-1658s-orbis-sensualium-pictus.html> (last accessed on Jan. 7, 2019); Joannes Amos Comenius, *Orbis Sensualium Pictus: Facsimile of the Third London Edition 1672*, with an intro. by James Bown (Adelaide: Sydney University Press, 1967); there are countless editions and translations until most recently; see, for instance,

to be captured in the woodcuts and in the corresponding explanations, so we are also confronted with activities and objects such as fowling (LII), hunting (LIII), feasting (LVIII), bathing in the house (LXXV), swimming (LXXXVIII), musical instruments (CI), stage playing (CXXX), tumbling (sleights) (CXXXI), fencing (CXXXII), tennis playing (CXXXIII), dice playing (CXXXIV), racing on foot for boys (CXXXV), boys sports (CXXXVI), and this apart from a wide gamut of topics pertaining to human life, religion, politics, craftsmanship, and philosophy. In other words, the topic of pleasure and leisure can hardly be contained and finds countless outlets, expressions, documentation, and reflections. To be clear, however, Comenius did not have a particular interest in delving into a discussion of those two subjects; instead, the images convey information about the wide array of aspects relevant in human life. Despite being fundamentally didactic in his intentions, this author still allows us excellent insight into various forms of entertainment practiced in the seventeenth century. The great popularity of this instructional book for young readers, this *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*, allows us to conclude as well that those types of pleasure activities continued to be practiced in the following centuries.

Summaries

I do not intend to provide only simple paraphrases of the individual contributions. After having engaged with each paper through an extensive revision process, which then also has involved some outside reviewers, the time has come to place each article into the wider context, to examine the comments and observations, and to add further insights, as much as this might be possible despite the wide range of specific literary, historical, or art-historical material. The annotations then will take us further into research questions and pave the way for additional investigations.

As we have seen already above, the global notion of the medieval Church as being entirely hostile to the notions of pleasure and leisure would not be really supportable, especially if we widened our interpretation of those two terms and accepted them also within a more purely intellectual realm. What, however,

Orbis Sensualium Pictus: El mundo en imágenes (Buenos Aires: Libros del Zorro Rojo, 2017); Joann. Amos Comenii *Orbis Pictus* (1783; Göttingen: Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, 2018). For a bibliography of the relevant editions, see Kurt Pilz, *Johann Amos Comenius, die Ausgaben des Orbis Sensualium Pictus: eine Bibliographie* (Nuremberg: Stadtbibliothek, 1967); cf. also Robert Alt, *Herkunft und Bedeutung des Orbis pictus: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Lehrbuchs* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970).

might have been the situation in a monastery?²⁵⁶ Did the Benedictines or Cistercians even grant any freedom to their members to relax during free time, if there ever was any? Considering the strict rules governing all aspects of life in virtually all monastic orders, it might be, at first sight, a fruitless task to take into view medieval monastic life from the perspective of game and play. Yet, that is the very challenge which Alex Ukropen pursues in his contribution to this volume, taking into consideration how intellectual efforts might have offered entertainment, after all. As innocuous as riddles might be, already the early Middle Ages witnessed a considerable interest in this literary and intellectual genre.²⁵⁷

For instance, throughout the very long reception history of the anonymous *Apollonius of Tyre* from the second or third century C.E. to the seventeenth century (Shakespeare) at least, the employment of riddles in this text in its myriad of manifestations all over Europe was of considerable significance, serving both for hiding of a criminal secret (incest) and for liberating the depressed protagonist from his psychological suffering.²⁵⁸ Apollonius, deeply forlorn about the loss of his wife and even his daughter, is aimlessly roaming the Eastern Mediterranean, always hiding in the bottom of his ship. However, once having reached a peculiar harbor, a prostitute arrives who engages him in a riddle-solving contest. Eventually, the two recognize each other, the intelligent woman proving to be his own daughter, at that point enslaved to a pimp and hence forced to visit the poor man and to try to cheer him up. This intellectual game makes it possible for Apollonius to recover from his state of psychological distress, which leads to

256 See, for instance, Jens Rüffen, *Mittelalterliche Klöster: Deutschland – Österreich – Schweiz* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009); Gert Melville, *Die Welt der mittelalterlichen Klöster: Geschichte und Lebensformen* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2012); Sherri Olson, *Daily Life in a Medieval Monastery* (Westport, CT: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2013). The issue pursued in our context is, however, never addressed in such otherwise excellent studies.

257 Tomas Tomasek, *Das deutsche Rätsel im Mittelalter*. Hermaea. Neue Folge 69 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1994); for a very different, more epistemological approach to the idea of riddles, see Corinne Dale, *The Natural World in the Exeter Book Riddles*. Nature and Environment in the Middle Ages (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2017). Already Paul Zumthor, *Langue, texte, énigme* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), had resorted to the term ‘riddle’ in a very loose fashion, which does not help us in our context.

258 Elizabeth Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre* (see note 58); Albrecht Classen, “Reading and Deciphering in *Apollonius of Tyre* and the *Historia von den sieben weisen Meistern*: Medieval Epistemology within a Literary Context,” *Studi Medievali* 49 (2008): 161–88. See also Rafał Boryslawski, *The Old English Riddles and the Riddlic Elements of Old English Poetry*. Studies in English Medieval Language and Literature, 9 (Frankfurt a. M., Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2004); and for riddles in late medieval literature, Curtis A. Gruenler, *Piers Plowman and the Poetics of Enigma: Riddles, Rhetoric, and Theology* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017).

the happy end and a profound sense of relief for all major figures involved, except for the pimp who is burnt at the stake.

For the audiences throughout the entire Middle Ages, then, this ancient and ever-new novel provided considerable entertainment because the critical issues are finally cleared when riddles are solved. Father and daughter ultimately recognize each other and joy returns to both of their lives. If we pursue this issue further, we can discover many other literary, philosophical, religious, and didactic narratives from the entire pre-modern world where the enigma matters centrally and provides entertainment and intellectual relief when it is solved, such as in the case of William Langland's *Piers Plowman* (ca. 1370/1390). As Curtis A. Gruentler observes, "the enigmatic might best be defined as a style or practice of language that intensifies spiritual meaning by generating a metaphorical surplus while drawing attention to its inadequacy in the face of what it points to."²⁵⁹ While riddles separate normally those in the know from those who are ignorant, the ultimate enigmas point "to knowledge that cannot be simply possessed but asks to be played with in the company of other players."²⁶⁰

Similarly, returning to Ukropen's paper, solving riddles in a monastic context, especially in Canterbury with its most innovative and sophisticated school curriculum at that time, represented a considerable form of intellectual pleasure for members of early medieval monastic reading communities. Aldhelm (ca. 639–25 May 709) received the major portion of his education in Canterbury,

259 Curtis A. Gruentler, *Piers Plowman and the Poetics of Enigma: Riddles, Rhetoric, and Theology* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017), 71. Gruentler also considers such intellectuals as Augustine, William of Saint-Thierry, Hugh of Saint-Victor, and Bonaventure who all draw from Saint Paul's famous verse in 1 Corinthians 13:12, "We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known." *The Vulgate Bible*. Vol. VI: *The New Testament*. Douay-Rheims Translation, ed. Angela M. Kinney. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2013), 917.

260 Gruentler, *Piers Plowman and the Poetics of Enigma* (see note 259), 91. He also considers the concept of presenting riddles as a medium of mystagogical epistemology, considering the work of Julian of Norwich. Sarah Wood, in her review, comments: "the enigmatic character of *Piers Plowman* means that it is often best approached obliquely (or as Paul writes in Gruentler's signature bible-text, 'in part'). Some of the book's best insights accordingly come in the form of passages of exposition that are themselves almost riddle-like both in their brevity and in their rich concentration of thought." Wood offers the rather meaningful conclusion, stating "And in our own tumultuous times, in which the ideal of interpretative community seems increasingly fractured into competing special interests, it is salutary to be reminded that while *Piers Plowman* is enigmatic, in the terms of this book, it is neither esoteric nor exclusive. Undeniably and purposefully difficult, *Piers* continues to invite all inspired to the arduous pursuit of truth to participate in the pleasure of thinking about its puzzles." *The Medieval Review*, online, 18.11.08.

and later, in 675, he became Abbot of Malmesbury Abbey, and in ca. 705 he was appointed Bishop of Sherborne. He was the composer of a larger didactic work, *Enigmata*, in which he included many riddles for didactic purposes. The intellectual effort to solve the riddles, searching for sources hidden behind them, provided considerable pleasure for the monastic readers, novices and monks alike. Critical exegesis offered tremendous pleasure and was a substitute for play practiced outside of the monastic walls. However, as Ukropen notes, Aldhelm was not making fun of and with riddles; his *enigmas* represented serious intellectual challenges and required from his students an extensive knowledge of classical literature. Drawing from Symphosius's *Aenigmata* (late antiquity), Aldhelm elaborated his riddles to a considerable degree and thereby developed a highly intricate linguistic and epistemological game, without ignoring the central concern to uplift his readers to achieve religious illumination by means of didactic and poetic strategies – use of complex meter; Antiochene style of exegesis favoring historical, literal interpretations; and requesting from them to consider etymological questions. Intriguingly, Aldhelm expected from his students both solid biblical and scientific knowledge, thereby upping the level of the intellectual game that could be handled only by the best educated individuals who would also know some basic Greek, and this already in the early Middle Ages. In this regard, he set the tone for clerical gaming as we have already observed it in the case of the *Carmina Burana*, and to which we could also add Andreas Capellanus's *De amore* (ca. 1180/1190),²⁶¹ or, to be a little playful ourselves, Hermann Hesse's *Glasperlenspiel* (1943) and Umberto Eco's *Il nome della rosa* (1980).²⁶²

261 Albrecht Classen, "Spiel als Kultur und Spiel als Medium der Lebensbewältigung im Mittelalter" (see note 102).

262 Hermann Hesse's famous *Glasperlenspiel* (1943) was certainly a modern avatar for this; He received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1946 for his accomplishments (see also above, note 19). The central topic in this novel is how the protagonist, Josef Knecht rises through the echelons of the esoteric and secluded school of Castalia, learning to master the 'glass bead game' that involves the synthesis of vastly different subject matter, such as Chinese philosophy, music, and physics, in a harmonious new entity. Not surprisingly, the head of Castalia is called 'Magister Ludi,' the master of the game. However, Knecht, despite his intellectual brilliance and perfect performance of the glass bead game in his role as the new head of Castalia, realizes the artificiality and meaninglessness of this intellectual and educational activity practiced in that province and leaves his post to return to real life. Although he then suddenly dies in his effort to become a role model for a young man, Tito, to whom he had been assigned as tutor, his death has a deep impact on his student and changes his life. Hermann Hesse, *Das Glasperlenspiel: Versuch einer Lebensbeschreibung des Magister Ludi Josef Knecht samt Knechts hinterlassenen Schriften*. Sammlung Fischer (Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer, 1999). The literature on this literary masterpiece is legion; but see Martin Pfeifer, *Erläuterungen zu Hermann Hesse: Das Glasperlenspiel*. 5th ed. Königs Erläuterungen und Materialien, 316 (1983; Hollfeld: Bange, 1998); Harold Bloom, *Her-*

As Ukropen finally suggests, this highly sophisticated and learned form of playful interaction via solving riddles, as developed primarily in Canterbury and soon in other monasteries as well, set the standard for much subsequent riddle literature, such as in the tenth-century *Exeter Book of Riddles*. As Ukropen basically concludes, we can now deduce from those most sophisticated riddles that monks were also supposed to play, although not in a secular fashion, because the ultimate life philosophy is predicated on the principle of randomness in human, but certainly not in divine terms. Humans solving riddles are only attempting to approximate or realize the divine plan for human life. We are thus invited to test further Huizinga's and Caillois's theses regarding the *homo ludens*: life is a game, and we live, as we might say, well in agreement with God's wishes if we understand and practice the rule of the universal game to the best of our abilities. Whether we will ever have a chance at winning that game is another matter.

But how are we then to understand the foundations of monastic life in the early Middle Ages if the principle of game was accepted as a metaphor of human existence, and this at a time when Christianity made its strong presence felt in the British Isles for the first time? After all, as Warren Tormey emphasizes, monastic discipline and spiritual education were of supreme importance, and yet the Anglo-Saxon *Saints' Lives* inform us in surprising detail about practical aspects concerning the activities during free time when pleasure and leisure were given free rein, after all, or when a tempted saint was taken to hell and nearly killed by demons. While many monks dedicated their entire life to the joyful performance of religious services, we also read about others who deviated from their duties and followed more mundane pleasures, which was not surprising considering the heavy demands of medieval monastic existence.

Reform-minded critics such as Bede and his late correspondent Egbert, the Archbishop of York, took it upon themselves, of course, to criticize their too lax brethren and thus cast them, out of a stringent sense of moral conservatism, as deviants and distracted individuals who preferred the worldly entertainments of their secular brethren over the contemplative and self-denying ethos of divine service. The more some individual monks emerged as ideal models, completely submitted under the Benedictine rules, the more the masses of other monks were viewed with suspicion for their lack of idealism, being too prone to worldly

mann Hesse. Bloom's Modern Critical Views (Philadelphia, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 2003). See also Umberto Eco, *Il nome della rosa* (Milan: Bompiani, 1980).

pleasures and entertainments, such as the excessive consumption of alcohol.²⁶³ As much as the early medieval miracle accounts, commonly distributed in the world of monastic literature, relate astounding events, they indirectly also shed light on individuals' misbehavior, drunkenness, and tendency to turn to secret games and plays. The more the early medieval monastic authors outlined moral teachings, the more they indirectly mirrored ordinary life even in their own institutions, which were apparently filled with mirth and entertainment.

The alignment between Anglo-Saxon monastic and aristocratic culture is further underscored in the accounts reflecting on the horrors of the underworld, which serve to equate the ascetic saint with the battle-ready thegn. Here we can actually catch glimpses of a peculiar form of religious entertainment, causing the audiences to feel a chill in their spines, being terrified and yet also fascinated by exploits of the heroic warrior-saint traversing underworld boundaries or in mortal combat with demonic forces. Moralizing teaching, especially when bringing about shivers, can also produce entertainment, and just when we think we might have lost the medieval reading public (in monasteries) to the arcana of their religious belief system, we actually recognize how much they actually drew immense entertainment from those lurid reports. When the saints are rescued or saved from the claws of the devil, a sigh of relief was not unexpected. We can thus clearly perceive literary scenes within the monastic communities that were technically informed by those theological teachings, but in reality also derived much pleasure from those horror scenarios they would personally be spared from. Just as in the case of Hieronymus Bosch's (1450–ca. 1516) nightmarish paintings,²⁶⁴ the hellish scenes mirror, indirectly, what these early medieval

263 This was, of course, a universal criticism throughout the Middle Ages, as didactic literature well into the early modern time highlighted this point quite consistently, being voiced both by traditional Catholic authors and, later, by Protestant critics as well. See the contribution to this volume by Albrecht Classen. See also the contributions to *Lust und Last des Trinkens in Lübeck: Beiträge zu dem Phänomen vom Mittelalter bis zum 19. Jahrhundert; Begleitpublikation zur Ausstellung vom 4. August bis zum 6. Oktober 1996 im St. Annen-Museum zu Lübeck*, ed. Gerhard Gerkens (Lübeck: Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, 1996); Reinhold Kaiser, *Trunkenheit und Gewalt im Mittelalter* (see note 171). Global studies on medieval monasticism, such as Gudrun Gleba, *Klosterleben im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2004), are so much concerned with the universal history of this historical institution that the critical aspects pertaining to the everyday life behind the walls do not come into any focus.

264 Walter Bosing, *Hieronymus Bosch: c. 1450–1516: Between Heaven and Hell*, ed. Ingo F. Walther (Cologne, Taschen, et al.: Taschen, 2004); Guido Boulboulé, "Groteske Angst: Die Höllephantasien des Hieronymus Bosch," Auffarth, Christoph and Kerth, Sonja (Eds): *Glaubensstreit und Gelächter: Reformation und Lachkultur im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Christoph Auffarth and Sonja Kerth (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2008), 55–78; Enrico Malizia, *Hierony-*

monastic authors feared most, that is, worldly pleasures, which they were, in their own opinion, very much subject to as well and which hence appeared in their infernal visions in such dramatic and graphic terms.²⁶⁵ Could we perhaps draw here some unsuspected parallels with modern-day horror movies?

Literary documents already from the early twelfth century reveal at times great interest in playing with ideas, social norms, concepts, and thus in entertaining the audience by presenting a variety of options of the erotic discourse, for instance, as Fidel Fajardo-Acosta illustrates through a close analysis of the love poems by the first troubadour, Count William IX, Duke of Aquitaine and VII Count of Poitier, focusing, above all, on his “Ben vueill que sapchon li pluzor.” Here, the poet combines references to all kinds of pastime activities practiced at court, and he creates a new game as well through the presentation of his poetic account. This was possible, of course, only because social, economic, and agricultural resources were suddenly available in abundance, perhaps as a result of a global change in weather conditions,²⁶⁶ but we also have to take into consideration the rise of a new intellectual culture at the aristocratic courts characterizing the long twelfth century.²⁶⁷

Fajardo-Acosta hence suggests that the new courtly world was not only determined by serious, at times even tragic love wooing, but also, and probably most of the time, by playful activities, as the other contributions to this volume also confirm, such as chess, but then also tournaments, hunting, and various ball games (including tennis and golf).²⁶⁸ While William IX might have been one of the earliest ones to utilize the concept of game to engage with the

mus Bosch. *Insigne pittore nel crepuscolo del medio evo. Stregoneria, magia, alchimia, simbolismo* (Tricase: Youcanprint Ed., 2015). The literature on Bosch is, of course, legion.

265 Both Peter Dinzelbacher, *Angst im Mittelalter: Teufels-, Todes- und Gotteserfahrung: Mentalitätsgeschichte und Ikonographie* (Paderborn, Munich, et al.: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1996), and Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*. Conjunctions of Religion & Power in the Medieval Past (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), approach, quite understandably, these hellish images with great seriousness, but we must also recognize a certain level of aesthetic pleasure, perhaps of a masochistic kind.

266 Albrecht Classen, “Globalerwärmung im Mittelalter als Grundlage für die Entstehung der höfischen Liebe?,” *Wandlungsprozesse der Mentalitätsgeschichte*, ed. Peter Dinzelbacher and Friedrich Harrer (Baden-Baden: Deutscher Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2015), 121–46.

267 C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals 939–1210*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); Peter Dinzelbacher, *Structures and Origins of the Twelfth-Century ‘Renaissance’*. Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, 63 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 2017), 163–64, et passim.

268 See the contribution to this volume by Marilyn Sandidge.

other gender in his love poems, the notion of game can be found in many other texts throughout the centuries, regularly assuming a significant epistemological function (Goethe's *Faust*, Stefan Zweig's *Schachnovelle*).

Complementing my own theoretical reflections on game in the introduction to this volume, and expanding and diversifying them further, Fajardo-Acosta insists that games are a very serious matter for all human culture. Just as laughter proves to be a significant topic for pre-modern Culture Studies,²⁶⁹ so games emerge as highly relevant mirrors of fundamental conditions both at medieval courts and elsewhere, shedding intriguing light on the history of mentality and of everyday life.²⁷⁰ As I have already indicated above, he also subscribes to the idea that gaming proves to be constitutive for the experience of courtly love, as the evidence of William IX strongly confirms, constantly inviting and obfuscating the forces determining this erotic phenomenon. Desire in game and desire in love correspond to each other, which could help us finally to grasp the vast world of courtly love poetry in a more concrete fashion. In light of much recent research on more or less contemporary erotic poems (*Minnesang* or the poems by the *trouvères*), which easily prove to be a highly sophisticated game with fictional material and imagined roles of lovers and their ladies, we can only support this broad argument, which Beate Kellner has recently analyzed in great depth.²⁷¹

While the issue of love dominates this and his other poems, William found himself in a complex and difficult world that constantly required negotiations, campaigning, and struggle to maintain his social status and political influence. The notion of game in the love poem thus mirrors this unsteadiness and the random character of life through the sense of competition and bargaining. The game of love ultimately represents the game of life, requiring endurance, skill, and technique, especially at court with its competing, at times openly hostile forces. William's effort, hence, to stay on top of his engagement with women, proves to be a literary expression of the real game, in the political arena which requires carefully tuned rhetorical and negotiating skills, which is perhaps best represented by Tristan in Gottfried von Straßburg's eponymous romance (ca. 1210), whom

269 *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times* (see note 75).

270 *Europäische Mentalitätsgeschichte: Hauptthemen in Einzeldarstellungen*, Peter Dinzelbacher. 2nd, rev. and expanded ed. Kröners Taschenausgabe, 469 (1993; Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 2008). Although one chapter is dedicated to 'joy, sorrow, and happiness' (for the Middle Ages, Urban Küsters), the topic of 'game' is not covered here.

271 Beate Kellner, *Spiel der Liebe im Minnesang* (see note 104). See now also Veronika Hassel, *Das Werk Friedrichs von Hausen: Edition und Studien*. Philologische Studien und Quellen, 269 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2018).

we really should identify as a master gamer, whether in playing music, hunting animals, playing chess, or fighting an enemy.²⁷²

In the case of William IX, however, the introduction of a board game with its very specific rules constituted a development for the poet which he could not quite handle as successfully as perhaps other activities in his previous life, maybe because the rules of love are now much more complex and independent, subjecting the lover to a foreign entity of high independence, that is, the game itself. Love demands education, character, honor, and submission under ethical and moral principles, and for the lover to be successful required both then and today a high level of sophistication to command those rules and to make the game work for him/herself, and not the other way around. After all, every player wants to win, which is the driving motivation throughout time, but which also threatens to imprison the gamer, or lover, in his/her own world of courtly activities!

Immersed in the excitement of the moment, no one visiting a casino anywhere in the world, whether in Las Vegas, NV, Baden-Baden, Germany, or Monaco would even think of the long history of gambling, which nevertheless easily reveals to have been a surprisingly significant part of human culture throughout time.²⁷³ Every person participating in gambling knows that there is mostly luck at play, but the risk, randomness, and fortune involved provide enough excitement for the individual to disregard mostly the greater likelihood of losing.

Chiara Benati investigates in her contribution how gambling and particularly profits from gambling were viewed by clerical, didactic writers in the history of

272 Hannes Kästner, *Harfe und Schwert: der höfische Spielmann bei Gottfried von Straßburg*. Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literaturgeschichte, 30 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1981); W. T. H. Jackson, "Tristan the Artist in Gottfried's Poem," *Tristan and Isolde: A Casebook*, ed Joan Tasker Grimbert. Arthurian Characters and Themes (1995; New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 125–46 (orig. 1962). See now Will Hasty, *The Medieval Risk-Reward Society: Courts, Adventure, and Love in the European Middle Ages* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2016). He emphasizes that "[l]ove and adventure ... are conspicuous indications of the emergence of a culture of wagers and investments, of a medieval society based on risks and rewards in which the sacrifices of sufferers are being replaced by the ventures of entrepreneurs" (204). I doubt that those economic terms are the best chosen here, whereas gambling, playing games, and deliberate risk-taking in a ludic fashion would be more appropriate, as I am suggesting with this entire volume.

273 For a list of major casinos all over the world today, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_casinos; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_casinos_in_the_United_States (both last accessed on Aug. 12, 2018). There does not seem to be any printed lists of casinos, so the article on wikipedia must suffice for our purposes.

late medieval German literature. Since gambling represents such an uncertainty, those hoping to win after all, have commonly resorted to some forms of magic, such as amulets. Benati focuses first on the fifteenth-century *Keyser Karlens Segen* (“Emperor Charles’ Blessing”) in Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, Ms C 101, fol. 106r, where the author/scribe Gallus Kemli also takes the opportunity to appeal to God to help mainly himself, but also people in general against the danger of illicit games, especially in the form of gambling. This was a common theme in much of late medieval didactic literature, such as in the works of Reinmar von Zweter, Hugo von Trimberg, Freidank, Konrad von Haslau, and then also in some of the most famous customals, or law books, such as Eike von Repgow’s *Sachsenspiegel* (The Saxon Mirror). Gambling debts constitute, such was the tenor throughout the late Middle Ages, grave dangers for the soul and should not even be collected, as the famous itinerant Franciscan preacher, Berthold of Regensburg (thirteenth century) and the fifteenth-century preachers Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl and John of Capistrano underscored as well. The latter even made great efforts to have board games, dice, playing cards, etc. all burned in public bonfires.

Benati can thus identify a long-term discourse entertained both by those didactic, clerical authors, and by state officials, and, ultimately, also by satirical writers such as the Humanist Sebastian Brant in his *The Ship of Fools* (1494). Uncannily, we today are also only too aware of the danger entailed in gambling, and have long recognized it as a grave addiction that can lead to a person’s economic, ethical, and moral destruction, as the famous Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky illustrated so powerfully in his novella “The Gambler” (1866). Nevertheless, medieval authors/preachers were already fully aware of this problem and intensively warned their audiences against this vice.

All human societies pursue one form of pleasure or another, and once we understand what leisure activities are most popular, we can most likely draw significant conclusions about the culture and mentality of that society. This also applies to medieval Iceland where a culture based on the horse dominated. Hence, it is not surprising that horse fighting, *hestaat*, was commonly practiced at major social meetings.²⁷⁴ Contrary to previous research, however, Carlee Arnett in her contribution to this volume can confirm that those competitions

²⁷⁴ Susanna Forrest, *The Age of the Horse: An Equine Journey Through Human History* (2016; London: Atlantic Books, 2017); see also Emil Dagobert Schoenfeld, *Das Pferd im Dienste des Isländers zur Saga-Zeit: eine kulturhistorische Studie* (1900; Hamburg: Severus-Verlag, 2011). Surprisingly, the voluminous *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Phillip Pulsiano (New York and London: Garland, 1993), does not offer any entry on this topic.

did not aim at all at a deadly outcome because horses were much too valuable for medieval Icelanders and because horses do not naturally fight to death. Horse fighting is mentioned a good number of times in saga literature and other texts, such as legal documents, commonly accompanying large public gatherings, where men primarily wanted to demonstrate their valor, honor, wealth, and political power. This is particularly well described in the early thirteenth-century *Víga-Glúms Saga* which takes place mostly in and around Eyjafjörður in North Iceland, and recounts the life and death of Glúmr Eyjólfsson, who is prone to kill people and so faces numerous legal conflicts, ultimately not being able to hold on to his power. He converts to Christianity a few years before his death.

Both here and in other texts there is clear indication that those sport competitions with horses are carefully observed and judged to avoid conflicts over the outcome. Arnett also emphasizes that horse fighting could be used to pit one region of Iceland against another, which would virtually allow us to call this a 'national' sport, and this already in the high Middle Ages, involving the highest members of society, with much money changing hands, as illustrated, for instance, by the more or less contemporary *Eyrbyggja Saga* which deals with numerous conflicts between various families in the region of Snæfellsnes over resources and land. These horse fightings were, as Arnett points out, not simply a form of pleasure, but a substitute for a variety of social, economic, and political conflicts. Nevertheless, such a *hestaát* normally ended with one horse submitting to the other, or simply yielding the field to the winner. Injury to a horse or even its death could have only been the result of human intervention, but the saga literature does not confirm that this was ever the case in medieval Iceland. As this study thus suggests in very clear terms, the examination of this form of entertainment sheds important light on medieval Icelandic society at large, revealing the power structures, the jockeying for rank and esteem, and the competing maneuvers to gain wealth, land, and influence. This form of pleasure thus proves to be also an expression of significant political and economic struggles in that remote Nordic country.

Taking us to the opposite direction of our thematic range, but only in cultural and geographic terms, Sally Abed examines the central importance of public and private entertainment through the performance/reading of tales contained in the Arabic *Thousand and One Nights* (originally created in the Persian language, translated and disseminated in Arabic throughout the Middle Ages, sub-

sequently transmitted also to Europe since the early eighteenth century).²⁷⁵ This collection of tales is not simply a classic in Arabic literature, but a major contribution to world literature, considering the wide range of cultural and linguistic issues raised and explored here. Abed especially focuses on the intriguing interaction between the two sisters, Shahrazad and Dinarzad, the one on top of the bed, the other underneath it, who both cooperate to keep the narrative afloat which thus ultimately saves Shahrazad and with her many other women in the caliphate from certain death because of their gender and marriageable age.

While here we deal with a literary text, the role of the female storyteller as public entertainer can be easily traced in medieval Arabic culture, which parallels the phenomenon of the medieval female singer mentioned in various romances and poetry, including, above all, the prosimetric *Aucassin and Nicolette* (late twelfth or early thirteenth century). *The Nights* provide an extraordinarily vivid image of literary entertainment in the Arabic world throughout the entire Middle Ages and beyond (until today) and alert us to the central importance of similar tales created in Europe since the twelfth century, either under the influence of this Arabic work or autochthonically, whether we think of Petrus Alfonsi's *Disciplina clericalis* (early twelfth century), Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus Romanorum* (ca. 1240), the *Gesta Romanorum* (late thirteenth century), the famous *Novellino* (end of the thirteenth century), the *Cent Nouvelles nouvelles* (ca. 1460), and the sermons by someone like Johannes Geiler von Kaysersberg (1445–1510), not to mention Boccaccio's *Decameron* (ca. 1350) and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (ca. 1400).²⁷⁶

275 *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, ed. Ulrich Marzolph, Richard van Leeuwen, and Hassan Wassouf (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004); Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (London: Tauris Parke, 2005); *The Arabian Nights Reader*, ed. Ulrich Marzolph (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2006); *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism – Perspectives from East and West*, ed. Yamanaka, Yuriko and Nishio, Tetsuo (London: I. B.Tauris, 2006); for the global reception history, see *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context: Between East and West*, ed. Saree Makdisi and Felicity Nussbaum (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); see also *Scheherazade's Children: Global Encounters with the Arabian Nights*, ed. Marina Warner and Philip F Kennedy (New York: New York University Press, 2013). For the reflections of Islamic cultures in this collection of tales, see Muhsin Jasim Musawi, *The Islamic Context of the Thousand and One Nights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). For an overview of modern musical compositions, films, translations, images, and other media all responding to the *Arabian Nights*, along with an excellent bibliography, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Thousand_and_One_Nights (last accessed on Feb. 14, 2019).

276 Robert J. Clements and Joseph Gibaldi, *Anatomy of the Novella* (see note 225); Mittelalterliche Novellistik im europäischen Kontext (see note 230); Klaus Grubmüller, *Die Ordnung, der Witz und das Chaos* (see note 225).

However, in contrast to the European narratives, these Arabic tales are centrally focused on the female performer and give much weight to women as public entertainers, especially in the frame story, which finds significant reflections in the cultural-historical conditions in many parts of the Arab world, from Baghdad to Seville in Andalusia, many practicing a variety of the arts, including dancing, singing, and playing a music instrument – the comparison with Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* from 1558/1559 would help us, however, to understand more significant parallels. Often, those performers were slave women who had received a high level of education, perhaps comparable with the Japanese Geishas. But those artistic practices were also embraced by high ranking women, including those of a royal status.

In particular, Abed alerts us to the rather unusual position of the sister Dinarzad sitting under the marital bed, which finds no echo in historical reality, but she argues that here we find a literary expression of the often hidden yet powerful role which women artists could play in medieval Arabic society. Even though Dinarzad seems to be of secondary importance only, her interrupting and encouraging voice serves Shahrazad rather critically to continue with the narrative concatenation which ultimately guarantees the women's survival and the end of male brutality. The analysis of the *Nights* thus sheds important light on the essential importance of entertainment, pleasure, and leisure as complementary functions of all life.

Without intriguing narratives, as in the *Arabian Nights*, without the human voice interrupting the silence in the night, our existence would be engulfed by death and slaughter. A powerful analogy to the relief that these stories bring to a desperate situation might be the pair of Middle High German heroic epics, *Nibelungenlied* and *Diu Klage* (both ca. 1200), the former concluding with an Armageddon, the latter with the profound and global lament about the tragedy. But that is not the end, just as in the *Nights*, because the storytelling continues, the performance goes on, and thus hope returns that the chain of life can be maintained, after all. Pleasure and leisure are not simply matters of social pastime, but a medium to reflect on the meaning of all existence within the free space of leisure time filled with stories and endless pleasure.²⁷⁷ After all, meta-

²⁷⁷ Albrecht Classen, "Diu Klage – A Modern Text from the Middle Ages?," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* XCVI, 3 (1995): 315–29; id., "Trauer müssen sie tragen: Postklassische Ästhetik des 13. Jahrhunderts in der Klage," *Ostbairische Grenzmarken. Passauer Jahrbuch für Geschichte, Kunst und Volkskunde* XLI (1999): 51–68; id., "Rituale des Trauerns als Sinnstiftung und ethische Transformation des eigenen Daseins im agonalen Raum der höfischen Welt. Zwei Fallstudien: *Diu Klage* und *Mai und Beafloer*," *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 36 (2006):

phorically speaking we could certainly claim that life is deeply determined by narration.

While I have touched upon falconry and hunting with birds of prey several times, in his contribution to this volume William Mahan investigates this aristocratic sport in greater detail, brining much evidence from across medieval Europe into view. However, he focuses on Middle High German heroic epics, courtly love poems, *Minnesang*, and on some of the central courtly romances where he recognizes each time the metaphorical use of the falcon to indicate character liminality and transgressions. Particularly because hunting with falcons required the intensive training of the birds, repressing their natural instincts and forcing them to submit under human rules, medieval poets and artists (especially in the *Codex Manesse*) realized the great effectiveness of the image of the falcon to mirror human shortcomings and efforts to overcome them. Incorporating narrative motifs with the falcon into their texts and images allowed them to explore tensions between the genders, problems within a protagonist's character, or tensions between the individual and society. Association with a falcon was virtually a guarantee for the public representation of one's own nobility.

Much depended in this courtly love discourse on whether the woman or the man was holding the falcon while riding out for the hunt, which certainly mirrored the ambivalence in the erotic relationship, that is, also tensions, fears, and power differentials. The falcon could be further used as a lure to seduce a lady, to buy her love, such as in the case of Dietrich von der Glezze's *Der Borte*, although there the lady submits under the lover's request only because she wants to acquire the falcon and other highly valuable objects, especially the belt, as significant gifts for her husband.²⁷⁸

According to Robert de Blois and Jacques d'Amiens, hunting with falcons was appropriate for ladies, who thus also had an opportunity to learn this sophisticated art which was a kind of segue into courtly culture. However, as refined as that art proved to be, the ultimate outcome still was the death of the prey; womanhood was hence not regarded simply as a weaker and softer form of human existence, as Dietrich von der Glezze also underscored strongly. Returning to the world of heroic epics, Mahan emphasizes that Kriemhild's

30–54. See also the contribution to this volume by Daniel F. Pigg dealing with William Langland's *Piers Plowman*.

278 Albrecht Classen, "Courtly Love vs. Marital Love, and the Sordid Business of Contracting Love: Jans Enikel's 'Friedrich von Auchenfurt,' the anonymous *Mauritius von Craîn*, and Dietrich von der Glezze's 'Der Borte': A Paradigm Shift in Thirteenth-Century Culture?," to appear in *Neohelicon*.

dream in the *Nibelungenlied* did not only prophecy her tragic future, the death of her husband Siegfried, but also reflected the huge challenges which she had to face. Mahan also identifies parallel scenes in texts such as *Salman und Morolf*, *Reinfried von Braunschweig*, and Konrad von Würzburg's *Partonopier und Meliur*, and each time the association of love, marriage, happiness, and subsequent death with the falcon proves to be a terrifying and sobering, yet also impressive and awe inspiring realization of how much women could be regarded with great respect, if not even fear by their male contemporaries.

However, Mahan also reminds us that many times the falcon could represent peace, a messenger between lovers, and a major political gift to establish political alliances. Yet, in the literary context, the falcon commonly stands for the conflicted self, the desire for the absent lover, and also precarious power relationship.

If we take, briefly, a huge leap and turn to a recent movie, the *The Eagle Huntress*, an internationally co-produced Kazakh-language documentary film from 2016, directed by Otto Bell and narrated by executive producer Daisy Ridley, we come across a rather meaningful modern analogy. Aisholpan, a thirteen-year-old Kazakh girl from Mongolia, attempts to become the first female eagle hunter to compete in the eagle festival at Ulgii, western Mongolia, established in 1999. Against much criticism by the men, she masters the art of training a golden eagle and actually wins the competition, subsequently completing her training by her father when she takes the eagle to the Altai Mountains where the bird succeeds in catching and killing its first fox.

Gender conflicts, identity roles, cultural traditions, and power struggles all play into the narrative, which thus underscores how much the topic pursued by Mahan continues to have relevance even today.²⁷⁹ Here we realize the extent to which game and serious struggle for the self within society are intimately interlaced with each other, and this struggle was not limited to the pre-modern world, but continues until our time.

In parallel to the hunt, with dogs or birds of prey, the tournament was the central event for courtly society to celebrate itself, to practice its own cultural values, and to create a large public forum for public entertainment. Alan V. Murray offers an in-depth discussion of how tournaments emerged in the high Middle Ages

²⁷⁹ Adrienne Mayor, "The Eagle Huntress: Ancient Traditions and New Generations," Stanford, May 1, 2016, online at: <https://web.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/EagleHuntress2016long.pdf>. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Eagle_Huntress (both last accessed on Dec. 16, 2018). The anonymous author assembles the most important opinions published on this movie in the major news outlets.

and how they contributed to the need of aristocracy, later also of the wealthy urban societies, to confirm its own values and ideals in this playful form of knightly performance. At the same time, which finds its extensive confirmation in modern sports and games, the relatively peaceful and non-violent practice of a tournament served very serious purposes, basically preparing the young knights for the actual experience in war.

As a historian, Murray turns his attention to the poetic work by the Styrian nobleman, Ulrich von Liechtenstein (ca. 1210–1275), whose *Frauendienst* provides a wealth of information about the entire phenomenon of a tournament, both pertaining to the individual knight and to the entire courtly company involved in it. Irrespective of its fictional character, Ulrich's romance sheds important light on many different aspects relevant in a tournament and can thus be used as a most valuable source for the history of this knightly sport, which ultimately involved everyone at court, whether they were active players or spectators.

While tournaments are carried out in many contemporary romances and are also described in numerous chronicles, Murray emphasizes the extent to which Ulrich goes into details about the actual conditions and actions relevant for a tournament. Despite the fictional character of his *Frauendienst*, the historian can glean much information about this type of knightly entertainment during the late Middle Ages, which could also turn into an absurdity, as the anonymous verse narrative, *Mauritius von Craün* (ca. 1220/1240) illustrates vividly. But this is not the topic Murray pursues.²⁸⁰

More to the point, however, the author highlights the combination of theatrical elements of jousting and its concrete, physical dimensions, with injuries and heavy losses of property as the result of a defeat in a tournament. Ulrich obviously did not shy away from giving highly specific information about this courtly game, which makes his *Frauendienst* into a truly valuable source both for historians and literary-cultural scholars alike. Although the poet relied entirely on a

280 *Mauritius von Craün*, ed. Heimo Reinitzer. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 113 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000); cf. Hubertus Fischer, *Ritter, Schiff und Dame: Mauritius von Craün: Text und Kontext* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2006); Albrecht Classen, "Mauritius von Craün and Otto von Freising's *The Two Cities*: 12th- and 13th-Century Scepticism about Historical Progress and the Metaphor of the Ship," *German Quarterly* 79.1 (2006): 28–49; id., "Courtliness and Transgression at Arthur's Court: With Emphasis on the Middle High German Poet Neidhart and the Anonymous Verse Novella *Mauritius von Craün*," *Arthuriana* 20.4 (2010): 3–19; id., "Disrupted Festivities in Medieval Courtly Literature: Poetic Reflections on the Social and Ethical Decline in *Mauritius von Craün*, The Stricker's *Daniel von dem Blühenden Tal*, and Heinrich Wittenwiler's *Der Ring*," *Neophilologus* 100.1 (2016): 87–104.

fictional narrative mixed in with autobiographical references, he excelled, as Murray brings to our attention, in conveying a most lively idea of how the various parties engaged with each other, what armors and weapons they used, how the horses were decked out, etc.

The tournament was, as we may conclude, a most impressive spectacle of courtly culture. Little surprise, then, that Ulrich did not hesitate to put on various female costumes, heightening thereby the theatrical character of his performance. He himself assumed a central position in this stage play and drew on all the possible sources, including clothing, color, weapons, music, horses, and armor. Certainly, the *Frauendienst* is predicated on practical tournaments, but the text itself transforms the full reading/listening experience into a playful experience involving the entire court. However, while Ulrich still projected a courtly world where the traditional values were intact, dark clouds assembled on the contemporary horizon, if we keep in mind how the tournament in *Mauritius* develops and then concludes in a rather ridiculous fashion.²⁸¹

As the discussion of Ulrich's *Frauendienst* makes abundantly clear, the medieval courtly public was commonly exposed to an intricate mix of official, military practices and playful games, such as the tournament (or card games, as Raid demonstrates in her article). The courtly games could thus be displayed, practiced, examined, refined, and applied. Even though there is no doubt about the deadly and serious matter of warfare, such as the crusades or wars of conquest/defense, the knightly class was essentially interested in practicing its art through a public display, which was apparently as important as the actual military operations. The earnest and the playful thus mixed intricately, and both dimensions shed light on each other in that process.²⁸²

281 Albrecht Classen, "Angst vor dem Tod: Jämmerliche Männerfiguren in der deutschen Literatur des Spätmittelalters (von *Mauritius von Craün* zu Heinrich Kaufringer und *Till Eulenspiegel*)," *Jenseits: Eine mittelalterliche und mediävistische Imagination: Interdisziplinäre Ansätze zur Analyse des Unerklärlichen*, ed. Christa Agnes Tuczay. Beihefte zur Mediävistik, 21 (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2016), 213–31; for a review, see Helmut Birkhan, in *Mediävistik* 32 (forthcoming).

282 See Max Wehrli, *Literatur im deutschen Mittelalter: Eine poetologische Einführung* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1984), 204–13. See also Hans Fromm, "Komik und Humor in der Dichtung des deutschen Mittelalters," id., *Arbeiten zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1989; orig. 1962), 24–42. He formulates, significantly, "Komik bedarf nicht des Humors. Doch integriert umgekehrt eine bestimmte Form der Komik in den Humor, wenn er sich in ihr auch nicht erschöpft" (26; comedy does not require humor. However, a certain form of comedy becomes integral to humor, even if it does not become exhausted in it). Neither scholar considers the case of Ulrich von Liechtenstein, but their observations about comedy in general allow us to grasp better the performative nature of the *Frauendienst*. In the larger context, the

Pleasure and leisure are, closely considered, not really separate from real life; instead, they profile it, project it, and serve as a testing ground for the material conditions outside of the ‘playground.’ The world of play or theater was traditionally relegated to a distant corner of social reality, but, as this concrete example of Ulrich’s *Frauendienst* indicates, the players in the tournament were specifically exploring the basic, central conditions of their own existence, as knights, as jousters, as lovers, as organizers, and as actors.

However, where is the dividing line between illusion and reality, and when do we recognize what is true and what is a deception? Such questions are not only representative of our own day and age, with its flood of news and ‘fake news,’ smear campaigns and trickery, advertisement and pretense. Already since late antiquity, the ‘science’ of magic was used not only to achieve astounding effects for religious reasons, often counter to the workings of natural laws, but also for entertainment, as Christa Tuczay discusses in her contribution.²⁸³ While the Church was always highly suspicious of all forms of magic, since the early Middle Ages it became increasingly clear that magic could be employed and was used also to achieve illusions and hence entertainment, especially at the courts. In a religious context, ‘magic’ (maybe divine divination or similar aspects) was practiced as part of a competition against the priests of pagan cults, which had actually roots as deep as the Old Testament, but when magic entered the public stages in the high Middle Ages, many of the traditional conflicts were softened, especially because early forms of modern sciences (Roger Bacon) relying, for instance, on optics and their illusionary effects, became better known and were witnessed by wider audiences.

Konrad of Würzburg’s romance *Partonopier and Meliur* (ca. 1285/90) offers an excellent example of such a situation, where the daughter of the Byzantine emperor is an expert *extraordinaire* of the magical arts, without having any dealings with demons. In fact, in some narratives, such as the fifteenth-century *Malagis*, the magician has learned his craft at the university of Paris and basically holds a Ph.D. in Magical Sciences, as we might call it today and as one might

study by Ernst Robert Curtius, “Jest and Earnest in Medieval Literature,” id., *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. from the German by Willard R. Trask. Bollingen Series, XXXVI (1948; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953/1983/1990), 417–35, helps us to grasp in general terms the deliberate tension between play and earnest in the tournament.

283 This represents an interesting and valuable addition to the large research project that resulted into the volume *Magic and Magicians in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Time: The Occult in Pre-Modern Sciences, Medicine, Literature, Religion, and Astrology*. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 20 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter 2017).

earn, like Harry Potter, at the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. His skills, however, both bedazzle the emperor Charlemagne and irritate him because he realizes that he himself is no match to that powerful magician and has made a fool of himself in challenging him.

Although the late Middle Ages witnessed the tremendous growth of fear of witches, the witch craze, and when increasingly also heretics were pursued and burned at the stake, public entertainment by jugglers and tricksters became more popular, as is witnessed, for instance, by the famous figure of Till Eulenspiegel (the protagonist of a picaresque narrative first printed in 1510), although he ultimately laughs at his audience for believing his absurd claim, for instance, that he could fly.²⁸⁴

In the early modern age, the interest in the magician's illusions increased, especially among the laity in public spaces, probably because early modern sciences also made great strides and seemed almost like magic to the untrained eye. At the same time, as Tuczay concludes, we can observe a distinct line of magic practiced for entertainment and specifically predicated on illusions, and this already from late antiquity extending to the nineteenth century, and actually until today, performed by street artists, circus clowns and magicians, and other public entertainers. This is not to blur the differences between late antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the early modern age, but Tuczay unearths, indeed, a quasi-scientific discourse based on the art of magic and serving the purpose of creating deceptions. In the public arena, magicians had to compete with prophets, saints, charlatans, and scientists. Already then, we might conclude, those who had the greatest impact on the audience, by means of entertaining or dazzling the viewers, gained the upper hand.²⁸⁵ We might well wonder who had the most fun in that situation.

While we normally approach medieval and early modern literature and everyday life with an eye toward the public presentation of courtly culture and later also of

284 *Ein kurzweilig Lesen von Til Eulenspiegel*. Nach dem Erstdruck von 1515, ed. Wolfgang Lindow (1966; Stuttgart: Philip Reclam jun., 1978), fourteenth *Histori*, 42–43. By now, it is clear that the text was printed already around 1510/1511, and drew on much earlier medieval sources. For the recent state of art in *Eulenspiegel* research, see Herbert Blume, *Hermann Bote: Braunschweiger Stadtschreiber und Literat. Studien zu seinem Leben und Werk*. Braunschweiger Beiträge zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur, 15 (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2019); Albrecht Classen, "Laughter as the Ultimate Epistemological Vehicle in the Hands of Till Eulenspiegel," *Neophilologus* 92 (2008): 417–89.

285 Cf. also Keagan Brewer, *Wonder and Skepticism in the Middle Ages*. Routledge Research in Medieval Studies, 8 (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), who deals with the wide spectrum of illusions, wonder, fear, marvels, experimentation, and skepticism.

urban, bourgeois culture, a closer analysis reveals how much the issue of transgression in terms of drinking was also of significant concern, and this mostly in a public and private space at the same time. In his contribution, Albrecht Classen examines a number of relevant examples in late medieval and early modern German literature where a company of drinkers loses self-control and becomes entirely inebriated.²⁸⁶ While didactic writers such as Der Stricker and Hugo von Trimberg hortatively commented on this kind of behavior and warned their audiences not to follow that example, others, such as the very little known Der Freudenleere, presented concrete cases of this kind of binge drinking (“Der Wiener Meerfahrt”) with near catastrophic consequences for one of their companions.

This is not to say that the topics of wine and drinking were never viewed in positive terms. After all, wine has always enjoyed a considerable respect for its spiritual symbolism both in the Catholic Eucharist and many times in mystical visions, quite apart from its advantages as a healthy beverage and its strong medical purposes. Medieval Persian literature, for instance, knows many examples of poetic paeans on wine and drinking in general. Nevertheless, late medieval and then early modern writers increasingly identified heavy drinking of wine as one of the core issues undermining the moral and ethical fabric of their society. At the same time, the various stages of drunkenness, measured by the individual cups consumed, became a topic of intense interest, as reflected in one of the verse narratives by Heinrich Kaufringer (ca. 1400), in Oswald von Wolkenstein’s poetry (d. 1445), and in the anonymous “Von den großen truncken.”

Intriguingly, as this literary and didactic discourse indicates, which globally extended to the sixteenth century, many of the traditional types of entertainment, including tournaments, physical activities, ball-games, playing chess, dancing, etc., were replaced by excessive drinking, which led to a general decline of public culture. Classen also considers some relevant voices addressing the issue of extreme alcohol consumption as discussed in the sixteenth century, but this would have to be analyzed more closely within the larger context of the Protestant Reformation and the changing urban culture during that time. Well before 1517, but certainly contributing to the rise of the Reformation, the Strasbourg Franciscan Thomas Münzer already launched heavy satirical attacks in his *Narrenbeschwörung* from 1512 against the Church itself, the clergy, and also

286 While this is a summary of the contribution itself, I have expanded my research on this topic here to some extent, which is reflected in the subsequent comments. I hope that the reader will always keep in mind that the individual articles in this volume should be read in conjunction with this Introduction.

against people's common misbehavior, especially when they were drinking too much alcohol.²⁸⁷

Sebastian Franck's *Von dem grewelichen laster der trunckenheit*, could have easily been published in America during the Prohibition era, but it appeared in Augsburg, Germany, as early as 1533.²⁸⁸ The efforts by the authorities to impose limits often did not achieve the desired goals or were simply not carried out, which would explain the flood of critical voices, such as the one by Franck. For him, the heavy drinking, a custom which the French had brought to Germany, could only lead to many different sinful behaviors: "allen lastern die thür auffthuot / vnd die seel erwürgt vnd vmbbringt" (361; it opens the door to all vices, strangles the soul and kills it). Drunkenness hurts the body and undermines one's health (371), and it destroys all honor, good character, and reputation (374). Excessive drinking leads to the loss of one's money (377), the loss of

287 Thomas Murner, *Narrenbeschwörung* (Text und Bilder der ersten Ausgabe). Mit Einleitung, Anmerkungen und Glossar von M. Spanier, Neudrucke deutscher Litteraturwerke des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts 119–24 (Halle a. d. Saale: Max Niemeyer, 1894); for a biographical sketch, see Franz Josef Worstbrock, "Murner, Thomas," *Deutscher Humanismus: Verfasserlexikon*, ed. id., 2 vols. (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 2:299–368 (with references to alternative editions and further scholarship); for recent studies on this topic, see *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman. Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, 51 (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1993); Birgit Beine, *Der Wolf in der Kutte: Geistliche in den Mären des deutschen Mittelalters*. Braunschweiger Beiträge zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur 2 (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 1999); *Reformer als Ketzer: heterodoxe Bewegungen von Vorreformatoren*, ed. Günter Frank and Friedrich Niewöhner. Melanchthon-Schriften der Stadt Bretten 8 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2004); Cordelia Heß, "A Common Enemy: Late Medieval Anticlericalism Revisited," *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 21:1 (2013): 77–96; Albrecht Classen, "Anticlericalism and Criticism of Clerics in Medieval and Early-Modern German Literature," *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 72 (2014): 283–306. See also id., "The Baby and the Bath Water: Satirical Laughter by Thomas Murner and Herman Bote as Catalysts for a Paradigm Shift in the Age Prior to the Protestant Reformation: Literary Comedy as a Medium to Undermine all Authorities and to Create a Power Vacuum," *Paradigm Shifts During the Global Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. id. (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).

288 Sebastian Franck, *Vonn dem grewlichen laster der trunckenheit / so in disen letsten zeiten erst schier mit den Frantzosen auffkommen ...* (1533). Quoted from Sebastian Franck, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Ausgabe mit Kommentar*. Vol. 1: *Frühe Schriften*, ed. Peter Klaus Knauer (Bern, Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 1993), 356–408. For a discussion of this phenomenon in early modern history, see A. Lynn Martin, *Alcohol, Sex, and Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Early Modern History: Society and Culture (Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave, 2001); for the early twentieth century (1919–1933), see W. J. Rorabaugh, *Prohibition: A Concise History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). Michel de Montaigne discussed the large phenomenon of drinking and drunkenness both from the negative and the positive perspective, "Of drunkenness," in his *Essays* (see note 249), 244–51.

all reason and rationality (380), and it makes people riotous, aggressive, and contemptuous of God (382), so basically subject to some of the Seven Deadly Sins.²⁸⁹

Insofar as extreme consumption of alcohol results in foolishness and ignorance (386), we realize how much Franck was really addressing people's general attitude toward pleasure and leisure. Drinking wine would bring about artificial joyfulness, laziness, impertinence, and immoral sexual activities (390). The more we enter this treatise, with its strongly moralizing tone, the more we find here a great opportunity to explore the larger topic at stake here, at least indirectly through the negative lens of a Protestant preacher.²⁹⁰

While the genre of religious plays, Shrovetide plays, then comedies and tragedies, whether by Vigil Raber, Hans Sachs, or William Shakespeare, has attracted much research over the last century and more, the religious plays by Queen Marguerite de Navarre (1492–1549) still remain somewhat in the shadow of modern scholarship. In her contribution to this volume, Sharon Diane King offers a reading of the play *L'Inquisiteur* from ca. 1535 or 1536 where profound religious messages are conveyed urging the institutional and religious authorities to pay attention to the messages from children about the true approach to God, very much in line with Reformation principles. Everything here hinges on the fact that children defend their right to play and identify their games and toys as completely innocent and are entirely approved by God.

Here the Grand Inquisitor encounters a group of very young children who enjoy their simple games. For him, however, all this represents sinfulness and he is trying to enjoin them with harsh words to refrain from playing altogether. In the exchanges between the children and this powerful man, the latter suddenly experiences a change of heart and accepts their teachings, which basically undermine his mighty authority as Inquisitor and the methods by the Catholic Church to maintain its power and authority by imposing strict rules and orders

289 See, for instance, Heinrich von Burgeis's *Seelenrat* (late thirteenth century); cf. the discussion by Winfried Frey, "Alle zeit zu gueten dingen (Vers 967): Die Todsünden und ein gutes Leben im 'Seelenrat' Heinrichs von Burgeis," *Heinrich von Burgeis: Der Seele Rat*, ed. Elisabeth De Felipe-Jaud and Max Siller. Schlern-Schriften, 367 (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 2017), 281–90.

290 See also Sebastian Franck's more satirical *Ein Künstlich höflich Declamation vnd hefftiger wortkampf / zanck vnnd hader dreyer brueder vor gericht* (1531; An Artful, Polite Declamation and Intense Debate, the Conflict and Disagreement of Three Brothers Before the Judge), *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1 (see note 287), 329–55, in which the allegorical figures of the heavy drinker, the sexually obsessed, and the gambler fight over who would be the worst among them.

regulating even people's activities during their free time. The children's innocence and simple-mindedness both in their games and in their explanations serve the purpose to expose the brutality, meanness, and profound errors committed by the Inquisition and to relay, in subtle but effective ways, the principal teachings of the Reformers (*sola fide*).

While many contemporary French playwrights portrayed playing (card) games and other playful activities as silly, wasteful, and useless, reflecting, to some extent, even debaucheries and other immoral behavior, in Marguerite's case the role of children's game assumes a strong theological, didactic role. *L'Inquisiteur* seems to be a rather unique type of staged farce and does not find any significant parallels both within Marguerite's œuvre and among her contemporary playwrights, and this because the open treatment of possible torture on the stage and the drastic contrast between the stern, highly conservative Inquisitor and the very young children. The latter demonstrate, despite their truly young age, a high level of rhetorical eloquence and are deeply convincing in their naive arguments in favor of their games, which then converts the old man so angrily opposed to them.

Notwithstanding the obviously biblical models, Marguerite here makes an innovative and meaningful case for the relevance of children's game which can bring the individual even close to God. King even alerts us to the fascinating features of the games that lend themselves directly to spiritual explanations, which would support further our overall claim in this essay that games and play represent life and mirror the human quest for meaning on the game board called earthly existence. We might even go so far as to compare some of the games played in Marguerite's text with the maze often found in Gothic cathedrals inviting the faithful to go on a search for God and playfully walk through this image of life.²⁹¹ As one of the boys involved in the game, which is called *jeu de palets*, or quoits, a variant of shuffleboard, indicates, metaphorically speaking for all of mankind, we can throw our stones or chips, and we might get very close to the goal, i.e., God, but we tend to fall short after all and must keep striving as part of our life, always missing the mark even when we do our best to achieve the highest ideals. As King suggests, the hidden meaning here might be that the game constitutes human efforts, but since we miss the goal, after all, we depend fundamentally on God's grace (*sola fide*, *sola gratia*). Neither the teachings of the Church nor the force exerted by the terror organization called Inquisition would

²⁹¹ Penelope Reed Doob, *The Idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity through the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1990). She studies mazes both in concrete, physical form, and in their metaphorical, often literary manifestation.

grant the faithful access to God. Only the freedom to choose what game to play would make it possible for God to enter the individual's life.

Both in the early Middle Ages and throughout the subsequent centuries, gaming and related forms of playing were commonly en vogue, at least in private, which triggered many comments, bans, exhortations, criticism, and also formal approvals by the various authorities. In his contribution, Scott L. Taylor reviews a large number of relevant comments about many games and diverse forms of entertainment by secular and ecclesiastic authors and thus can demonstrate the great impact which pleasure and leisure had on medieval and early modern culture – and actually beyond until today. While pursuing this topic, examining especially explicit bans and laws issued by prelates, bishops, and kings, Taylor is in a productive position to confirm, similarly as Marilyn Sandidge in her study, how much many of the modern forms of games and sports were practiced already in the high Middle Ages, such as tennis, soccer, golf, archery, bowling, scuffle boards, and the like. Some scholars such as Jacques Le Goff have argued that the warnings about and prohibitions of game were motivated by the authorities' fear that their subjects could lose too much money, depriving the government of the expected tax revenues. Another concern, however, might have played a much bigger role, the worry that clerics and workers would waste too much time with games distracting them from their spiritual tasks. However, as we have already seen above in the discussion about Felix Fabri's travelogue, countless pilgrims and other travelers delighted in playing board games or throwing dice in order to pass the idle time during their voyage to the Holy Land, for instance.

Already in the pre-modern world, one of the greatest fears voiced by the critics was that individuals would waste valuable resources and efforts on silly activities, which could then be aggravated if those were combined with gambling. However, if a game such as chess could serve for the training of a mathematical mind, or for the teaching about ethics and virtues, then it was viewed in quite a different light and was actually approved, as the Castilian King Alfonso X el Sabio indicated through his various treatises on chess and other games (see above). Some French kings forbade all games that did not serve the military defense of the country, so they only approved of archery. In the fifteenth century, many city magistrates railed against the various types of sport activities because they were afraid that the working men would spend too much time away from their official tasks. However, members of the upper class who engaged in games were treated with much more respect and were granted considerable liberty to fill their free time with such activities, whereas those of the lower class were subject to much more severe criticism if they pursued the same types of games and plays.

Pleasure and leisure thus prove to be, as Taylor observes, significant indicators of critical issues in society, at times viewed with great suspicion and disapproval, at other times welcomed as important training and education activities, and at other time even encouraged as a means to help the authorities to collect more money, such as through lotteries set up as early as in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Games played among cultured friends, within the family, or under official control were more easily approved than games and leisure activities carried out privately, in taverns, and elsewhere. In other words, as the evidence assembled by Taylor indicates, games and plays reveal deeply the fundamental legal, moral, ethical, and religious principles governing a society, which also applies to our modern world, of course. Studying pleasure and leisure in the past thus allows us to gain a good understanding of cultural conditions, economic and political structures, and religious values.

Michael Conrad pursues quite a different and yet intimately connected approach to the larger topics of pleasure and leisure in his contribution to this volume, bringing to light the mathematical-theoretical underpinnings of all playing, as pre-modern thinkers had developed them. Most games, especially with dice and cards, involve a considerable degree of randomness, a critical issue which philosophers and theologians have discussed throughout the ages, such as the anonymous author of the *Loszbuch aus der Karten gemacht* from ca. 1506 and 1520, or Andreas Strobl with his *Der Anderte Theil oder Zusatz deß Geistlichen Karten-Spills* from 1696. Randomness mirrors God's actions in human life, which the individual can hardly, if at all, comprehend, as the fifteenth-century Middle High German poet Heinrich Kaufringer (ca. 1400) had already indicated in some of his verse narratives, especially in "Der Einsiedler und der Engel" (no. 1: The Hermit and the Angel).²⁹² Human life develops just as the dice fall, randomly, so it seems, even though God might have specific plans that the individual cannot figure out. In other words, what appears as random and contingent to us, especially when people play cards or throw dice, might actually correspond with divine intentions undecipherable for the human individual.

Conrad, at first, highlights Boethius's teachings on providence and fate as developed in his famous and most influential *De consolazione philosophiae* (ca. 525), and then examines the philosophical principles of randomness and probability from a mathematical point of view as discussed since antiquity.

²⁹² For Kaufringer, see notes 85 and 176 above. See also the contributions to *Religions in Play: Games, Rituals, and Virtual Worlds*, ed. Philippe Bornet. CULTuREL: religionswissenschaftliche Forschungen, 2 (Zürich: Pano-Verlag, 2012).

Throughout times, thinkers endeavored to come to terms with randomness through the creation of perfect dice and critical reflections on the meaning of the luck of the draw, if not bibliomancy (St. Augustine). Pursuing those notions in the late Middle Ages, Conrad then reviews the methodology underlying the *Libro de acedrex dados e tablas* by the Spanish King Alfonso X el Sabio (1221–1284), and the anonymous poem *De Vetula* (ca. 1250), where the idea of randomness also comes to the fore in a significant fashion.²⁹³

Understanding the very nature of dice and their workings in material terms required an extensive scientific analysis, which numerous philosophers and scientists tried to carry out, such as the Dominican Johann von Rheinfelden (born ca. 1340 in Basel), whose treatise on playing games (ca. 1377) Conrad analyzes in greater detail especially with respect to the principles of randomness and contingency, as also explored by such contemporary thinkers as Jean (or John) Buridanus (ca. 1300–1358/61), Nicole Oresme (ca. 1320/25–1382), and Albert of Saxony (ca. 1320–1390). Game, life, and fortune were, as they suggested in various ways, intimately interlaced with each other because of the lack of predictability in all human actions and the obscurity of the divine will, despite its obvious presence in all existence.

Johann von Rheinfelden intended his *De moribus et disciplina humanae conversationis id est ludus cartularum* also as a reflection on the social structure of his time and as a ludic medium to convey fundamental moral teachings. However, instead of exploring the subsequent tradition branching off into the genre of chess treatises (Jacobus de Cessolis, ca. 1250–ca. 1322), Conrad extends his discussion to an examination of the early history of playing cards in fourteenth-century Europe, which mirrored increasingly the workings of randomness in this world, while divine order appeared less and less in place. The emergence of playing cards in medieval Europe since the late fourteenth century, probably through Islamic channels, highlights this development. Conrad thus focuses subsequently on the *Stuttgarter Kartenspiel*, above all, a hunting-themed deck of playing cards from ca. 1430, and then brings ‘into play’ the earliest probability theory by Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576), elaborated in his *De ludo Aleae liber* (1565), which was based in its essential terms, on the calculations in *De Vetula*. Cardano was not crucially intent on elaborating the principles of a card game, but tried to figure out how one could protect oneself against cheating and deception and how to develop epistemological skills in that process. Pleasure and leisure, as

293 The word for “chess” in Alfonso’s book is *acedrex* or *açedrex* – *ajedrez* is a modern Spanish spelling. See the facsimile edition, Alfonso, *Libro de los juegos de ajedrez, dados y tablas*. 2 vols. (Valencia: Scriptorium, 2010). But see the authoritative study by (my former student and teaching assistant!) Sonja Musser, “Los Libros de Acedrex” (see note 72).

represented and illuminated by playing cards, thus emerge not simply as aspects of general entertainment, but as mediums to learn about basic human interactions, intellectual endeavors, and moral conditions. Card games and throwing dice reveal the workings of randomness, that is, of providence and fate in a rather incomprehensible world. Although many medieval moralists argued heavily against both activities as leading to sinfulness and vice, some of the critical thinkers reflecting on card games and dice suggested that those playful operations could actually convey fundamental insights into human existence within the divine order, after all.²⁹⁴

The value of examining the meaning of play and game in the Middle Ages becomes immediately apparent when we challenge ourselves and examine, as Daniel F. Pigg does in his contribution, how a rather apocalyptic text such as William Langland's *Piers Plowman* (ca. 1360–1390) reflected on music, jugglers, tumblers, and thus on entertainment at large within a wider social and religious context. At first sight, the poet was clearly opposed to those who waste their time and resources for idle play and game, while all others have to labor all day long. But, as Pigg points out, Langland operated on various levels evaluating his society, embracing actually a form of play with words as a meaningful benefit for society, if properly pursued.²⁹⁵

Minstrels are not only tumblers, singers, musicians, and performers, but they can also be wordsmiths, and Langland identified himself as one of them insofar as the poetic words can serve society to gain higher insight in God's plan

294 Timothy B. Husband, *The World in Play: Luxury Cards, 1430–1540* (see note 84); Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, *Gutenberg and the Master of the Playing Cards* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press; 1966); Catherine P. Hargrave, *A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming Compiled and Illustrated from the Old Cards and Books in the Collection of The United States Playing Card Company in Cincinnati* (1930; New York: Dover Publisher, 1966); Heinrich Hens, *Verspielte Tugend, spielbares Laster: Studien zur Ikonographie des Kartenspiels im 15. bis 16. Jahrhundert* (Aachen: Shaker, 2001); Helen Costantino Fioratti, *Playing Games: Games and Their Players from Antiquity to the Present* (Florence: Edizioni Polistampa, 2014).

295 See the contributions to *Words of Love and Love of Words in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 347 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008); Fidel Fajardo-Acosta, *Courtly Seductions, Modern Subjections. Troubadour Literature and the Medieval Construction of the Modern World*. *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 376 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010); Mark Amsler, *Affective Literacies: Writing and Multilingualism in the Late Middle Ages*. *Late Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 19 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

for humankind.²⁹⁶ Those minstrels, however, who aim only for personal profit through their presentations in public are not to be equated with those who offer delightful music and the like through which the individual soul can be uplifted. Little wonder that we find numerous medieval misericords depicting minstrels who were obviously not all condemned since music and singing had certainly a central place in the Church.²⁹⁷ Similarly, story tellers and pilgrimage guides, like the host in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, potentially deserve praise and recognition because of their usefulness for the individual in his/her struggle to achieve an improvement of the personal lot within the larger divine schema of things. But Langland carefully differentiated between those who assist and promote their audience by means of their words, and those who utilize their rhetorical skills to deceive and mislead the listeners. As much as the poet criticized all those who deceive, cheat, confuse, or confound their audience by means of their words, as much he leave, by the same token, as Pigg notes, plenty of room, even if only implicitly, for those who employ their words, specifically as Langland did, to ameliorate their world and to bring joy to people.

The worst location for people would always be the tavern because there gambling, drinking, lying, and other sins take place on a regular basis.²⁹⁸ Game and plays happen there, and they are nothing but a waste of people's time and seduce them even further to go down a slippery road, especially because the individuals are tempted to give in to excess. By contrast, the only correct way toward salvation would be toward Truth, which the joyful employment of words promises to support effectively. At the same time, if everyone carries out his/her duties, then even pleasant activities such as hunting, as performed by the members of the knightly class, would profit society at large because it keeps the wild animals from the fields.

Even tournaments are not necessarily viewed as an activity that should be banned for religious reasons. Instead, Langland does not hesitate to utilize the metaphor of the tournament for the description of Christ's Passion, nobilitating

296 Lawrence M. Clopper, *Drama, Play, and Game* (see note 244); Sarah Beckwith, *Signifying God: Social Relation and Symbolic Act in the York Corpus Christi Plays* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

297 Gwen and Jeremy Montagu, *Minstrels and Angels: Carvings of Musicians in Medieval English Churches*. Fallen Leaf Reference Books in Music, 33 (Berkeley, CA: Fallen Leaf Press, 1998); Maria Doboz, *Re-Membering the Present: The Medieval German Poet-Minstrel in Cultural Context*. Disputatio, 6 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005); Martine Clouzot, *Le jongleur – Mémoire de l'image au Moyen Age: Figures, figurations et musicalité dans les manuscrits enluminés (1200–1330)* (Bern and New York: Peter Lang, 2011); see also Linda Marie Zaerr, *Performance and the Middle English Romance* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2012).

298 See the contribution to this volume by Albrecht Classen.

thereby this knightly form of entertainment considerably. Langland identified himself as a minstrel and characterized this group of professional entertainer as worthy of high praise if they use their musical skills to the uplifting of their audience's hearts. As long as pleasures and leisure served for moral and religious purposes, then they met with the poet's approval. As critical as he was regarding games and plays, through his *Piers Plowman* Langland reveals the extent to which even he knew of many different forms of pleasure activities and actually approved a good number of them, if they were put to good use benefitting all of society.²⁹⁹

Both drinking and gambling, playing with cards and throwing dice were the usual suspects of moralizing preachers, both in the pre-modern and the modern (Las Vegas, Baden-Baden, Monaco, etc.) world. But people have always sought out forms of entertainment, so it does not come as a surprise that late medieval courtly society was commonly also committed to card games, as reflected by the famous *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* (Courtly Household Cards), which Maria Raid examines closely in her contribution, highlighting the specific clothing, coats of arms, colors, and other features of the figures and designs of the playing cards. Other famous card games were the *Visconti Tarot* (ca. 1450), those by Master Ingold (*Das Buch, das man nennt das Guldon Spil*, 1472; The Book that is called the Golden Game), by Hans Schäufolein, ca. 1535, or by Peter Flötner (1485–1546).³⁰⁰

Raid's analysis focuses both on the playing cards as such and on their artistic features, shedding significant light on the clothing and appearance of the various members of courtly society, from the king and queen all the way down to the hunters, jesters, cooks, and bakers. Sartorial regulations were of such great importance that they found their reflection also in these playing cards. The *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* thus emerges, similarly as the *Stuttgarter Kartenspiel* or the *Ambraser Hofjagdspiel*, as an important material witness not only of the types of entertainment at a major late medieval court, but also of the social roles and functions represented here. Playing with these cards invited those involved to reflect also on the political situation in fifteenth-century Europe since the various major kingdoms and political functionaries are referenced here.

299 See now the contributions to *Approaches to Teaching Langland's Piers Plowman*, ed. Thomas A Goodmann. *Approaches to Teaching World Literature*, 151 (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2018).

300 See the exhibit "The World in Play: Luxury Cards, 1430–1540," At The Met Cloisters, New York, January 20–April 17, 2016; *The World in Play: Luxury Cards, 1430–1540*, ed. Timothy B. Husband (see notes 82 and 200).

Again, life and game interlace in this card deck, which was a most expensive luxury item and was certainly used only by the members of the highest social class at the Habsburg courts. The imagery on the cards thus allow us, as Raid highlights, to reflect on the interrelationship between social class consciousness and the visual depiction of the members of the various social levels, with the nobility specifically engaged in entertainment and the pursuit of pleasure, for which they needed, of course, the help of the hunters, ladies-in-waiting, bakers, court jesters, etc.

Even though the aristocratic players were probably not particularly concerned with the presentation and conditions of the lower classes, they were in all likelihood pretty cognizant of the social world represented by the images on the cards and recognized them as standard features of their social framework. Similar to chess, but here relying on a different material, the card deck mirrored both real life and game, serious challenges and playful confrontations, as is the case until today with all games, whether card games, chess, or sport activities.

Raid suggests that the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* sheds light on the general awareness on the part of the game players that their world was determined by the interaction of the various figures, just as in the case of chess. While we might have lost the sense of earnestness when we dedicate ourselves to games, in the pre-modern world all plays were more than what the word today might imply, not just an infantile, children's activity, but an engagement with the fundamental conditions of life.

Even jesters and fools served critical functions, far beyond simple entertainment. Instead, as the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* also reveals, they were integral members of the court and deliberately cast satirical and ironic light on their society. Thus it makes good sense to witness the appearance of jesters and other lowly figures also in this royal card game. Laughter was just as important for the aristocracy as were serious deliberations, consultations, and negotiations; otherwise a critical tool to reflect on one's own foolishness and to avoid taking oneself too seriously might have been missing.

As much as aristocratic society was heavily predicated on hierarchy and its own authority, this card desk confirms that the pre-modern world did not operate on the premise of dictatorship or tyranny. On the contrary, even at the royal court the jester enjoyed much freedom to poke fun at the ruler and to ridicule the entire courtly society. The modern equivalent would be the practice of observing the culture of carnival with its topsy-turvy transformation of all traditional conditions. Ordinary life is regularly interrupted by game and playfulness, drinking, dancing, and many other forms of entertainment, as we recognize over and over again.



Fig. 1: Hans Schüpflein, left: A nun and a monk playing cards

One image on a card contained in the deck produced by Hans Schüpflein (ca. 1480 – ca. 1540), the 10 of Hearts, created ca. 1535, today held in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, profiles this phenomenon most intriguingly, mirroring the fashionable anti-clericalism of that time.³⁰¹ Here, a monk and a nun are sitting at a table and share a game of cards, while the monk clutches a bag of money. The satirical punch aimed directly at the corruption and moral failure of the clergy, especially members of monasteries, because they were not supposed to spend time together, in private, and were certainly not allowed to enjoy such a game, particularly not outside of the convent walls. So everything is wrong in this image, since neither one of the two people should spend time outside of their monastic community, particularly not with a member of the other gender, and should not even play with cards. The audience must have fully enjoyed that image, which obviously heightened the entertainment provided by the game itself.

³⁰¹ Hans Schüpflein: *Das druckgraphische Werk*. Vol. 1: *Katalog*, ed. Karl Heiny Schreyll (Nördlingen: Uhl, 1990); *Hollstein's German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts: 1400–1700*. Vol. 43: *Hans Schüpflein*, ed. Tilman Falk (Blaricum: van Gendt, 1996); cf. also Christof Metzger, *Hans Schüpflein als Maler* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 2002).

There are, hence, many opportunities for future research on this fertile topic of pleasure and leisure even though, or just because they have tended to be viewed very critically by the clergy of all different churches throughout time. The gamer consistently appears to rely on rules and provisions that seem to lie outside of the God-given cosmos; hence the players seem to be removed, at least temporarily, from the community of good Christians. Why many of the poets in the *Carmina Burana* (ca. 1220/1230), certainly highly learned individuals, all somehow belonging to the wider circle of the clergy, advocated gaming so much, would deserve to be studied at greater length.³⁰² In light of this observation, it would certainly be profitable to examine also early and high medieval sermons searching there for negative comments on how people spent, or rather wasted, their free time while not at work, not in war, and particularly not in church, which was, of course, in the clerics' perspective, the worst option of all.

Nevertheless, both the world of the courts and the high-ranking urban citizens increasingly submitted to the lure of game and playfulness, as is most dramatically illustrated in early modern French culture, which Michael Call examines in his contribution, emphasizing, above all, the new obsession with gambling and hence the willingness to accept risk-taking in a pre-meditated fashion. The principles of mathematical calculations based on randomness were first developed by Blaise Pascal and Pierre de Fermat who figured out in 1654 a basic mathematical concept of randomness in playing games and in dealing with odds, creating a paradigm shift moving the pre-modern world predicated on the notions of God as the all-determining force, of Fortune, or simply of luck, to a world in which mathematical calculations could determine the randomness of game. By studying Molière's *Alcepe* from *Les Fâcheux* (1661) and Jean-François Regnard's *Valère* from *Le Joueur* (1696), Call illustrates the translation of those theoretical models into practical aspects in literature, here performed on the stage by individuals who are nothing but gamblers and operate by means of probability. Neither virtues nor honor, neither faith in God nor the observation of morals matter centrally in these plays, although contemporary critics observed very clearly the dangers to their traditional teachings and explanation of this world resulting from this paradigm shift. Naturally, they rallied against the introduction of the ideas regarding calculable randomness, but virtually in vain, as both plays, but then also the history of game since the early modern age indicate. Even

302 Benedikt Konrad Vollmann, ed. (see note 14), and others have offered valuable analyses of a variety of topics and themes in this collection of songs, but the element of game has not attracted the necessary attention yet. But see Albrecht Classen, "Erotik als Spiel, Spiel als Leben, Leben als Erotik" (see note 104).

though this did not mean that the faith in God was eroded, but He was functionalized for the gambler or player to secure victory, a phenomenon that we can observe until today when athletes pray or appeal to God, or a saint through a religious gesture just before they enter the field. The examination of how gamblers approached their activities can thus shed illuminating light on the history of mentality because the manner of how games were carried out reflected on the intellectual and spiritual background determining the foreground and vice versa. To be sure, as Call's analysis brings to light, the public discourse focused on the rules of games relied increasingly by the end of the seventeenth century on calculations and mathematical strategies to foretell the outcome or the probability of winning.

The vagaries of Fortune could thus be contained according to those public assumptions and be replaced by rational moves, without abandoning entirely the traditional religious framework. While Molière's play still invited the audience to laugh at the failed gambler, who continues to trust Fortune and the involvement of divine forces, Regnard's play invited the audience to laugh at the protagonist for his inability to rely on probability theories and to see through the economic and political structures that make that game possible in the first place.³⁰³ This would be tantamount to us today laughing at those who visit Las Vegas in the serious hope of getting rich. The introduction of the randomness principle thus transformed game altogether, turning it from offering simple entertainment to being ultimately an instrument in the hands of those who control the monetary market (casinos) and victimize the naive gamblers for their own profit. We continue to enjoy games today, but, as Regnard's play signaled already then, the rules of the game began to change.³⁰⁴

While the Middle Ages did not yet quite know the notion of a leisure class, considering the military tasks of the knightly class and its high level of responsibilities for society at large – here disregarding the opposite view developed by Veblen – the early modern world increasingly witnessed the emergence of an entire social group on the upper level either enjoying the privilege of extensive leisure or simply being forced to dedicate their entire life to nothing but leisure activities because of economic, political, and military constraints. Thomas Willard examines this issue by focusing on the poet Henry Vaughan (1622–1695) who be-

303 John D. Lyons, *The Phantom of Chance: From Fortune to Randomness in Seventeenth-Century French Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

304 Juraj Hromkovic, *Algorithmic Adventures: From Knowledge to Magic* (Dordrecht, Heidelberg, et al.: Springer, 2009); *The Challenge of Chance: A Multidisciplinary Approach from Science and the Humanities*, ed. Klaas Landsman. The Frontiers Collection (Cham: Springer, 2016).

longed to the upper middle class and who found himself caught in the lull brought about by the Civil Wars in England. Similar to other intellectuals of his time, he was stuck in a conflict between his duties as a loyal servant of the king and the political pressure that forced him out of his projected professional life into one of relative leisure with little serious work to do in terms of a career.

Vaughan was only one of many educated young people during the Civil Wars who was at a loss about what to do, just as in the case of his twin brother Thomas because he had fought for the royal army and was subsequently not willing to swear an oath to the Parliament. Instead of holding an official post, he could thus only retire to his own farm and dedicate himself to writing poetry, letters, and other texts. As much as he disliked the low level of cultural opportunity at home, he was condemned to pass his time there, pursuing almost nothing but leisure activities, apart from managing his farm. Unfortunately, the surviving correspondence illustrates that he had only limited contacts with other like-minded individuals, which left Vaughan in a kind of intellectual vacuum. This he filled, drawing from his Latin education, writing his own poetry following the models of Juvenal, among other classical poets, decrying the common corruption of his time that made it impossible for him to find a meaningful occupation, despite his own medical training that he occasionally put to use in the countryside. Vaughan, not able to adapt to the swift political changes in seventeenth-century England, thus retired to a private life, resigned like many of his generation, to pursue only private, strongly religious interests.

Finally, widening the perspective from pleasure and leisure activities to the actual world of joking, pulling legs, playing tricks on others, and having fun through ridiculing others, Allison P. Coudert investigates the dark side of jokes predicated on mocking people with disabilities in the long eighteenth century. Enlightenment or not, the way members of the elite treated their servants, and especially people with disabilities would not be accepted today. The degree to which hunchbacks, dwarfs, giants, or many other types of grotesquely looking individuals were laughed at would seem shocking and entirely unacceptable to us today. Coudert, however, adduces overwhelming evidence – primarily from England, but the same phenomenon can be observed on the Continent – to confirm that public entertainment, especially by members of the upper classes, was predicated on cruelty, meanness, and utter disrespect for the suffering of the poor and the miserable.

Perhaps even more than in the pre-modern age, courtly entertainment often relied on the performance of physically disfigured people, whom the nobles enjoyed laughing at. At the same time, *Schadenfreude* was a very common feature,

as the culture of joking was rather ruthless and gross, often involving astounding physical violence (beating, kicking, throwing someone to the ground) and much misogyny, both commonly associated with heavy drinking, both in public and in private. Today we would call some of those comic scenes something like ‘hazing,’ as it is often still practiced by members of student fraternities even in the twenty-first century, but in the eighteenth century it was a common feature of public pleasure activities. While the sixteenth century and later periods on the Continent knew especially of the infamous trickster and jester, Till Eulenspiegel (first published in 1510), who freely made fun of everyone in his society, yet without attacking the marginalized and disabled,³⁰⁵ the eighteenth century obviously enjoyed a much more hoarse form of entertainment which spared no one and did not even shy away from belittling and hurting the weak, the poor, and the miserable in the shadow of the courtly and intellectual world.

Moreover, Coudert highlights the stunningly free availability of sexual material in print and in practical terms, which was also a major source of jokes. However, by mid century, the situation changed considerably, as first indicated by Samuel Richardson’s publication of his highly influential novel *Clarissa* (1748), which initiated a veritable paradigm shift toward more sensibilities and sensitivities by the turn of the century, which ultimately removed most of those pornographic, scatological, and misogynist jokes from public discourse. Whereas before laughing about raped women who had ‘actually enjoyed the act’ had been quite common, that approach began to change by the early nineteenth century.

Coudert alerts us, of course, that neither jokes targeting women or based on feces have disappeared, not even today, but those increasingly fell under a taboo with the rise of the new sensitivities, but also as a result of a growing scientific awareness that also concerned itself with the causes of disabilities. Of course, this new approach also meant that those suffering from disfigurement were increasingly removed from public view, which made it less likely that people joked about them. Similarly, gross jokes about women’s bodies and their sexuality gave way to new evangelical pietism and a higher degree of sensibilities, as the literary world since the 1810s and 1820s clearly indicates. This does not mean, as Coudert finally underscores, that this kind of mockery simply disappeared, but it had to move to the margin, to the shadows of polite society. We can be certain that the study of jokes from throughout the ages makes possible a penetrating analysis of the fundamental dimensions of every society.

305 See note 283 above for the critical edition; but research on *Eulenspiegel* has grown tremendously over the recent years.

As discussed already at great length in a previous volume included in our series “Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture,” bathing and all the pleasures associated with water have already constituted a significant aspect of the pre-modern world.³⁰⁶ But we also have to take into consideration the major social role of spas and bath houses especially since the early modern age.³⁰⁷ To frequent a public bath emerged as a major form of social entertainment especially since the seventeenth and eighteenth century in England, as we are informed by Melvyn Lloyd Draper in his contribution to this volume. Whereas bathing cultures were at first primarily a privilege for the aristocratic class, in the course of the eighteenth century both the upper and the lower urban classes accepted this leisure activity as something that had to be shared across the social barriers, especially because spas were identified as therapeutic centers that had to be open to all people, as witnessed, for instance, by the Jane Austin novels and the overwhelming historical-material evidence in spa towns. Apart from the medical purposes of visiting a spa, those locations were crucially important for early modern society in its endeavor to embrace a new form of physically-oriented health culture and leisure world since the late sixteenth century within England, at least. The practice of balneology both on the Continent and in England, especially in Bath, subsequently in Turnbridge Wells, underscored this new form of public entertainment, as Draper informs us. The fact that the well-to-do in the urban centers flocked to spas as a way of finding new forms of relaxed pleasures and leisure in the late eighteenth century can be identified as early markers of the emerging industrial revolution with its influx of enormous wealth for the upper crust of the city population. Visiting a spa soon constituted the thing to do for the rich and also the aristocrats, who combined the medical treatment with entertainment and public self-presentation, or sociability.

Only with the emergence of new technologies, especially the railway, which allowed the masses to travel to those spas, and then the eruption of epidemics, such as the cholera, did the spa culture dramatically decline again in the early

306 *Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene in Medieval and Early Modern Literature* (see note 63).

307 *Von der Badstube zum Badekabinett: Badekultur im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit / Römerthermen Zülpich/Museum der Badekultur*, ed. Daniela Rösing (Zülpich: Römerthermen, 2014); Daniela Rösing, *Von der Badstube zum Badekabinett: Badekultur im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit / Römerthermen Zülpich, Museum der Badekultur* (Zülpich: Landschaftsverband Rheinland, 2014); David Clay Large, *The Grand Spas of Central Europe: A History of Intrigue, Politics, Art, and Healing* (Lanham, MD, Boulder, CO, et al.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015); Jane M. Adams, *Healing with Water: English Spas and the Water Cure, 1840–1960* (Oxford: Manchester University Press, 2016).

nineteenth century. Nevertheless, until today, although at a much more muted level, does the world of spas exist, though nowadays with much less fanfare and not necessarily associated with issues such as pleasure and leisure. Under the claim/pretense of looking for medical relief from many kinds of illnesses and pains, the early modern visitors of spas found a convenient way of combining the useful/pragmatic with entertainment and leisure. Of course, the emergence of balneology and the proven results of water treatment for many types of ailments highlight that those seeking healing in spas were commonly rewarded. Nevertheless, as far as we are concerned here, the world of spas provided ever-growing circles of people access to a new form of pleasure activities well into the nineteenth century. Of course, this phenomenon can be traced back at least to some extent to the fifteenth century,³⁰⁸ but the epitome of the institution of spas or “Bäder” (in Germany) was only reached in the seventeenth and then eighteenth centuries.

If we consider how much the Middle Ages matter today for contemporary popular culture, it does not come as a surprise that the world of modern games (video, computer, cards, board games, etc.) is deeply intrigued with that culture. In fact, the number of ‘gamers’ fascinated by pre-modern culture is constantly growing, even if that might not have the desired effect that more of our students turn to the study of medieval languages. As Kevin and Brent Moberly warn us in their contribution, which intriguingly rounds off this volume by offering a perspective from the twenty-first century, the popularization of the theme of game and playing in medieval terms represents a new danger of marginalizing anything medieval into a childlike activity of no great relevance for serious matters. That was not quite the same situation in the Middle Ages, as we have already seen above, although the public discourse then also tended to ignore game and play as something negligible despite the seriousness with which nobles, for instance, played chess and participated in tournaments.³⁰⁹

308 Albrecht Classen, “A Slow Paradigm Shift: Late Fifteenth-Century Travel Literature and the Perception of the World: The Case of Hans von Waltheim (ca. 1422–1479),” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 42 (2017): 1–21. See also Robert Büchner, *Im städtischen Bad vor 500 Jahren: Badhaus, Bader und Badegäste im alten Tirol* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2018). I have explored this topic in much greater detail in *Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene* (see note 63).

309 See Sophie Caflisch, *Spielend lernen* (see note 1), 12–15, who points out how much medieval philosophers and didactic writers such as Aegidius Romanus, or Giles of Rome (d. 1313) already took into view the important role of properly selected games for children in their growth and development.

The Moberlys also investigate the way the medieval game of Nine men's morris has been picked up by those who produce computer-based games, thereby recovering a long-forgotten leisure activity for the modern audience. This specific game is contained in the *Conquests of the Longbow: The Legend of Robin Hood*, first released in 1991. Here, a serious attempt is made to authenticate the game as much as possible and to recover the experiences of that legendary folk hero for the modern player, but the common problems with all such forms of medievalism clearly come to the surface through the recreation of a past as it might never have existed, featuring a considerable degree of artistic license very typical of most types of medievalism.³¹⁰ Little wonder that much of the Robin-Hood-myth that was established in the nineteenth century re-emerges here as well, but now in the framework of an adventure game that takes the player on a challenging ride through the 'medieval' world created here. However, the very activity required reconnects this computer-game with actual games played in the Middle Ages when those types of leisure activities served both the purpose of entertainment and the goal of allowing the player to acquire intellectual and other skills, such as leading an army or ruling over a country (chess).

As the two authors notice, the game actually leaves Robin Hood in a state of indecisiveness and lack of orientation, wherefore the players have to intervene and give guidance and direction, and are especially needed in the game of Nine men's morris (in German: 'Mühle'; in Italian: 'Nove uomini morris,' in Spanish: 'morris,' etc.), which was actually very popular throughout the Middle Ages, but certainly dates much further back.³¹¹ The Moberlys subsequently offer an extensive discussion of the current level of knowledge concerning the historical background of Nine men's morris and thus provide not only insights into computer gaming today, but also into medieval, ancient, and prehistoric games, thus highlighting how much pre-modern cultures were fully dedicated to playing games, and not only chess, but also, backgammon, and Nine men's morris, although the name of the latter appears not until the early seventeenth century

310 See now the contributions to *Robin Hood and the Outlaw/ed Literary Canon*, ed. Lesley Coote and Alexander L. Kaufman. *Outlaws in Literature, History, and Culture*, 6 (New York and London: Routledge, 2019); *Robin Hood: The Early Poems, 1465–1560: Texts, Contexts, and Ideology*, ed. Thomas H. Ohlgren and Lister M. Matheson (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2007). Many scholars have dedicated their attention to this figure; see, for instance, Stephen Knight, *Robin Hood: A Mythic Biography* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2003).

311 For images of historical examples of this game, see [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%BChle_\(Spiel\)#/media/File:MuehlespielAlt.jpg](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%BChle_(Spiel)#/media/File:MuehlespielAlt.jpg) (last accessed on Jan. 25, 2019). See also Friedrich Berger, "Das Mühlebrett an einem Hause in Goslar," *Mitteilungen der ANISA* 17 (1996): 17–32.

in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (earlier terms were 'merels' or 'marelles,' terms derived from Latin 'merellus' [game piece]). It remains a matter of debate whether this game was more geared toward the rural or the urban/courtly audiences, but modern gamers do not face that problem as presented by recent scholarship.

At any rate, Nine men's morris made its way into present-day fantasy and entertainment culture and has assumed a significant role for computer-based games, operated at a safe distance from the past, but not so alien that there would not be significant intellectual and cultural bridges between both worlds. As the Moberlys indicate, *Conquests of the Longbow: The Legend of Robin Hood* represents history and yet is a modern game on its own. The past of games is allowed to re-enter modern fantasy, and many historical features are retrieved and reanimated thereby, but the gamer still knows all the time about his/her whereabouts, time, and space.

I have found an early modern board game in the collection of the Bauska Castle Museum, Lithuania, that could have served for this game as well. Note, however, there are, at first sight, striking differences in the design that raise some doubts.³¹² Nevertheless, there is a similar image in King Alfonso el Sabio's *Book of Dice*, that is, *El libro delos dados*, contained in the *Libro de los Juegos: de ajedrez, dados y tablas*, commissioned by the king himself and completed in 1283.³¹³ The image in our fig. 2 could thus be identified as "Three-in-a-row," or "alquerque de tres" (fol. 93v).³¹⁴

312 The webpage of Bauska castle identifies it as "Nine men's morris," <http://www.bestriga.com/en/page/expanded/article/584/Living-history-at-Bauska-Castle> (last accessed on Jan. 27, 2019), but this could be questioned. Maybe this tile does not even represent a board game and served only decorative purposes. The dice placed on the board might also originate from the early modern age, but it is not clear whether they were actually used with that game.

313 The text of this masterpiece on games was a Castilian translation of Arabic texts, and those themselves had probably been translations of Persian manuscripts. See, for an introduction, Robert I. Burns, S.J., "*Stupor Mundi*: Alfonso X of Castile, the Learned," *Emperor of Culture: Alfonso X the Learned of Castile and His Thirteenth-Century Renaissance*, ed. id. Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 1–13, here 2; Dwayne E. Carpenter, "'Alea jacta est': At the Gaming Table with Alfonso the Learned," *Journal of Medieval History* 24.4 (1998): 333–345; here 336; Belén Bistué, "Multilingual Translation and Multiple Knowledge(s) in Alfonso X's *Libro de la ochava esfera* (1276)," *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 40 (2009): 99–122; Linde M. Brocato, "Alfonso X's *Libro de ajedrez e dados e tablas* or *Libro de los juegos* Interrogating Convivencia," *Revisiting Convivencia in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, ed. Connie Scarborough. Juan de la Cuesta Hispanic Monographs, 11 (Newark, DE; Juan de la Cuesta; 2014), 297–334.

314 <http://games.rengeekcentral.com/F93.V.html> (last accessed on Jan. 27, 2019). I would like to thank Michael Conrad for pointing this out to me. This specific game is described in the section



Fig. 2: Board game similar to Nine men's morris, Bauska castle, Courland, Latvia, sixteenth or seventeenth century.

called “Book of Morris, Mill, or Merels.” Alfonso X, *Libros del ajedrez, dados y tablas*. 2 vols. (Madrid: Patrimonio Nacional: Coeditores Vicent García Editores, Valencia y Ediciones Poniente, 1987). Cf. Barbara Schlieben, *Verspielte Macht: Politik und Wissen am Hof Alfons’ X. (1252–1284)*. *Wissenskultur und gesellschaftlicher Wandel*, 32 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2009); *Kulturtransfer und Hofgesellschaft im Mittelalter: Wissenskultur am sizilianischen und kastilischen Hof im 13. Jahrhundert*, ed. Gundula Grebner. Akademie Philosophie (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009). This game, “alquerque de tres,” however, is normally not played with dice. It might be worth taking note of global parallels between this game and the game ‘patolli’ commonly played by the virtually contemporary Aztecs (thirteenth to sixteenth century). I would like to thank Maha Baddar (Pima Community College, Tucson) for pointing this out to me. Cf. William R. Swezey and Bente Bittmanfor, “El rectángulo de cintas y el patolli: nueva evidencia de la antigüedad, distribución, variedad y formas de practicar este juego precolombino,” *Mesoamérica – Antigua* 4.6 (1983): 373–416; for further background information and an image of this board game, see online at: <http://www.aztec-history.com/ancient-aztec-games.html>; for instructions how to play patolli, see <https://www.bead.game/games/traditional/patolli>; for more background on the Aztecs and their games, see <http://www.mexicolore.co.uk/aztecs/home/gambling-and-patolli-the-aztecs-favourite-game> (all last accessed on Jan. 27, 2019). David Tomiček,

Acknowledgments and Final Reflections

Even though I did not have much leisure available at all while doing my research for this introductory study, I had much pleasure writing it, expanding once again our book series “Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture” by opening up yet another chapter of the pre-modern world. As it turns out, despite the seemingly playful, random nature of all games, they easily prove to be a most serious matter, especially concerning the cultural, philosophical, religious, literary, and art-historical conditions in the past (and present, of course). Play and games provide a pattern, a ritual, rules, and a framework for experimentation, probing, and challenging. This does not mean, of course, that playing games was tantamount to exploring esoteric issues, but as a metaphor for all life, game was certainly, as a pleasure and leisure activity, of great significance throughout the Middle Ages and far beyond. Philosophically speaking, we might still pursue this concept and accept it as fundamental for human existence. The contributions to this volume hence explore a multitude of perspectives regarding this issue, adding intriguing insights into a rather kaleidoscopic phenomenon of fundamental importance.

It is rather fitting that at the very moment when this volume was put together, news spread that art historians working on medieval and early modern graffiti discovered countless carvings in the walls of the Lincoln cathedral, UK, some of them also representing games and toys, probably dating back to the fourteenth century. What were the parishioners or the clerics doing inside and outside of this majestic building, producing those images in stone, deep-carved, and hence most likely created with the bishop's approval (just like the gargoyles, the misericords, and the many rather ambivalent corbels)? In many ways, I believe, our volume promises to offer a range of answers to those questions.³¹⁵ Play-

evaluating the game board on the tile in the Bauska castle museum, recognized an intriguing parallel to the Czech game “Clovece, nezlob se,” translated as “Man, don't be angry,” in British English, ‘Ludo.’ All these suggestions indicate that the topic of game allows us to explore universal parallels in the culture of entertainment for young and old throughout time.

315 See the following online sites, although they might not be stable in the future: <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-england-lincolnshire-45226374/thousands-of-ancient-graffiti-carvings-found-at-cathedral?SThisFB>; <https://museu.ms/article/details/116935/archaeologists-have-found-medieval-graffiti-deepcarved-into-lincoln-cathedral>; <http://www.culture24.org.uk/history-and-heritage/archaeology/art559083-lincoln-cathedral-medieval-graffiti-connected-restoration> (last accessed on Sept. 19, 2018). As to graffiti as historical documents, see the contributions to *Historische Graffiti als Quellen: Methoden und Perspektiven eines jungen Forschungsbereichs*, ed. Polly Lohmann (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2018).

fulness and the serious quest for God worked closely hand in hand. Could we hence speculate that if people regarded themselves as individuals in need of play, or being co-defined by play, then God, who had created people in His image, also must have enjoyed playfulness? That would mean that Creation was a cosmic game, and we are the pawns on the game board, or enjoy the privilege of participating in the game ourselves.³¹⁶ That only leaves us with the question of who might be the true and ultimate *magister ludi*. If we are players, could we maybe even beat God in His own game, at least with His approval?³¹⁷

The famous German Baroque poet Johannes Scheffler, known best under his pseudonym Angelus Silesius (1624–1677), offered an intriguingly different perspective, presenting God as the one who plays with us, when he formulated his epigram “Gott spielt mit dem Geschöpfe” (no. 198; God is playing with the creatures).³¹⁸ The poet speculates that all of physical existence is nothing but a game carried out by the Godhead because He created all creatures for His own purposes, that is, his own pleasure: “Sie hat die Kreatur um ihretwilln erdacht” (v. 2; sic). Much depends on the perspective, of course, but we must keep in mind that games normally require at least two parties that compete against each other. We could at least agree with Scheffler that life emerges as a game and needs to be viewed through that lens. As we have observed already above, even mystics such as Mechthild von Magdeburg recognized the relationship with the Godhead as a game, as an operation with an infinity of options on

316 Lynne Broughton, *Interpreting Lincoln Cathedral: The Medieval Imagery* (Lincoln: Lincoln Cathedral Publ., 1996); John Shannon Hendrix, *Architecture as Cosmology: Lincoln Cathedral and English Gothic Architecture* (New York: Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers, 2010). Cf. also Nurit Golan, “The North Portal of the Freiburg im Breisgau Minster: Cosmological Imagery as Funerary Art,” *Death in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: The Material and Spiritual Conditions of the Culture of Death*, ed. A. Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 16 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 155–91, regarding the correlation of visual signs on medieval architecture and their messages about spiritual and intellectual dimensions.

317 See the contribution to this volume by Michael Conrad, who explores the element of randomization as a principle of all existence, where an instrument in God’s hands or a tool used by the devil to confound people. Cf. also the study by Michael Call in this volume, who focuses on the role of randomization as a mathematical concept in seventeenth-century French plays.

318 Angelus Silesius, *Cherubinische Wandersmann: Sinnliche Beschreibung der vier letzten Dinge*, ed. Hans Ludwig Held. Sämtliche Poetische Werke, 3 (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1949), 64; cf. Horst Althaus, *Johann Schefflers “Cherubinischer Wandersmann”: Mystik und Dichtung*. Beiträge zur deutschen Philologie, 9 (Gießen: Wilhelm Schmitz Verlag, 1956); Jeffrey L. Sammons, *Angelus Silesius*. Twayne’s World Authors Series, 25 (New York: Twayne, 1967); Richard von Kralik, *Angelus Silesius und die christliche Mystik* (Paderborn: Salzwasser Verlag, 2013).

a firm game board. In this sense, Scheffler contributed to the same discourse on pleasure and leisure as fundamental, though not exclusive, principles of all existence.

A fun factoid from the end of 2018 might highlight the validity of some of those ideas explored in this essay, and especially with respect to Scheffler. Traditionally, the German card game “Schafkopf” has been particularly popular in the state of Bavaria in all of its diverse regions, bringing together all family members. Recently, however, the popularity of this game has declined, and as a consequence numerous education authorities both at high schools (Philologenverband) and in the Bavarian ministry for education voiced their concern about this development and suggested that “Schafkopf” be introduced as an official subject to be taught at schools.³¹⁹ The concept behind this idea is predicated on the reasonable assumption that this card game would improve strategic planning skills, mathematical thinking, and emotional and social competence. Young people should thereby be motivated to put aside their smartphones and turn to interactive, face-to-face games and group activities. As much as this and other card games represent a playful activity, as much does playing itself serve as a platform to practice real life. The same has often been argued with respect to chess, which was played at aristocratic courts (see above) and is today increasingly recognized as a valuable teaching tool in schools and elsewhere.³²⁰

As we can now conclude, supported by much recent research and by our own observations, both pleasure and leisure, that is, entertainment at large, sport activities, or the immersive virtual realities of electronic video-games,

319 “Steht Schafkopf bald im bayerischen Lehrplan?,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Dec. 28, 2018; online at: <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/beruf-chance/campus/bayerischer-philologenverband-will-schafkopf-an-schulen-foerdern-15962284.html>; <http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/schafkopf-bayerischer-philologenverband-will-kartenspiel-an-schulen-foerdern-a-1245514.html>; for the history of this game and its rules, see <https://www.schafkopfschule.de/index.php/startseite.html> (all last accessed on Dec. 31, 2018). Those news were reported in many major and regional media outlets. The game of “Schafkopf” is determined by a whole vocabulary on its own, much of which goes back to the late Middle Ages. For a solid list, which would otherwise be very difficult to come by, see <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schafkopf-Sprache> (last accessed on Jan. 2, 2019; all verified again on April 26, 2019). For the rules of this game, see now Adam Merschbacher, *Die hohe Kunst des Schafkopfspiels* (Wolnzach: Kastner, 2018).

320 <https://chessintheschools.org/>; <https://online.seu.edu/chess-in-schools/>; <http://www.schachkurse.at/>; <http://www.schach.ch/index.php?seite=5.schulschach>; <http://www.elle.fr/Maman/Mon-enfant/A-l-ecole/Echec-scolaire-l-ecole-pointe-trop-les-fautes-1727458> (all last accessed on Dec. 31, 2018; verified again on April 26, 2019). Similar webpages exist in many languages and countries.

games, and playing in many different contexts constitute crucial aspects in human culture, both high and low, past and present.³²¹

Correspondingly, drawing additional evidence from the Middle High German verse narrative *Alexander* by the twelfth-century poet Priest Lamprecht, the experience of complete pleasure and leisure can constitute a form of utopia, but that utopia, as the name indicates, is, of course, far removed from normal life and can be found, at least in this text, only in the midst of a forest where flower girls delight Alexander and his men in every possible manner, dancing, singing, playing music, and eventually offering themselves to love-making.³²²

Pleasure and leisure are, so to speak, the time-out from the everyday routine, and yet they mirror ordinary life in a facetious, entertaining fashion, as the ladies and gentlemen in Boccaccio's *Decameron* (ca.1350) practiced as well, or as is the case in the Arabic 'classic' of *Thousand and One Nights*. As the intriguing verse narrative "Peter von Staufenberg" (ca. 1310) informs us, to finish with a medieval German example, a good knight, highly esteemed and liked by everyone all over the country, is a knight who can not only fight exceedingly well, but who is also very skillful in playing board games, music instruments, writing poetry, carrying out successfully various types of hunting, and hence knows exceedingly well how to pursue courtly joys.³²³ None of that eventually helps him to secure his

321 See the contributions to *Playthings in Early Modernity: Party Games, Word Games, Mind Games*, ed. Allison Levy (see note 202).

322 *Das Alexanderlied des Pfaffen Lamprecht (Strassburger Alexander)*, Text, Nacherzählung, Worterklärungen von Irene Ruttman (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974); Werner Schröder, "Der Pfaffe Lambrecht," *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, ed. Kurt Ruh et al. 2nd completely rev. ed. Vol. 5 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1985), 494–510; for a slightly updated overview with a more recent bibliography, see Volker Zapf, "Pfaffe Lamprecht," *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon: Das Mittelalter*, ed. Wolfgang Achtnitz. Vol. 5: *Epik (Vers – Strophe – Prosa) und Kleinformen* (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 61–68. As to the flower girls, see especially Tomas Tomasek, "Die Welt der Blumenmädchen im 'Straßburger Alexander': ein literarischer utopischer 'Diskurs' aus dem Mittelalter," *"Das Schöne soll sein": Aisthesis in der deutschen Literatur; Festschrift für Wolfgang F. Bender*, ed. Peter Heßelmann (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2001), 43–55.

323 *Der Ritter von Staufenberg*, ed. Eckhard Grunewald. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 88 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1979), 158–67. For a comprehensive study, see Richard Ernest Walker, *Peter von Staufenberg: Its Origin, Development, and Later Adoption*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 289 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1980); cf. also Ingrid Kasten, "Tabu und Lust: zur Verserzählung 'Der Ritter von Staufenberg,'" *Neugier und Tabu: Regeln und Mythen des Wissens*, ed. Martin Baisch and Elke Koch. Rombach Wissenschaften. Reihe Scenae, 12 (Freiburg i. Br.: Rombach, 2010), 235–52. As to the central value of 'joie' or 'joy' in courtly society, see Siegfried Christoph, "The Language and Culture of Joy," *Words of Love and Love of Words in the Middle Ages and the*

happiness through his love affair with a fairy, whose taboo he is breaking, but this is not the topic of the present study.

As in the case of most volumes in our series “Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Studies,” the present project is based on a symposium that I organized at The University of Arizona, Tucson, May 3–5, 2018. Some of the funding and support came from the Dean of the College of Humanities, and from the Departments of German Studies, Spanish and Portuguese, French and Italian, Religious Studies, and the School of International Languages, Literatures, and Culture, for which I am very grateful. All participants contributed with their registration to the successful realization of this symposium, and most of them then submitted their expanded and thoroughly revised papers for consideration in this volume. Every article was subsequently peer-reviewed repeatedly by some of the other contributors, and extensively edited multiple times by me in close cooperation with the authors, so I deeply appreciate the collegial spirit and collaboration in this process. I am very glad that they all demonstrates much patience with my constant requests for many further revisions and expansion of their research.

On a more personal note, I would like to express my thanks to my co-editor of this book series, and now contributor once again, Marilyn Sandidge (Westfield State University, MA), for her constructive criticism of this introduction. Others offered me also suggestions and advice, especially Fidel Fajardo-Acosta (Creighton University, NE), who gave this Introduction a very thorough final read, and Tom Willard (University of Arizona). All three also assisted me in making some final decisions regarding a problematic submission that was ultimately rejected. Most of this introductory essay I could write during almost two months of research at German and Austrian universities from June to August 2018, and I would like to acknowledge the wonderful resources and help from various university and archive libraries in Bamberg, Halle, Tübingen, Nuremberg, Graz, Frankfurt a. M., Bochum, and Göttingen. My colleague and friend, the remarkable medievalist Peter Dinzelbacher (Werfen near Salzburg), was so kind to let me use his personal library and made very helpful suggestions. It is also a pleasure to express my thanks to the editorial staff at Walter de Gruyter in Berlin for assisting me to get this book into print in a highly professional manner. Finally, it is always a personal joy to extend my gratitude also to the staff of the library of the University of Arizona for its immense support for every type of research that I am doing, responding to many requests for special items, either through purchase or

interlibrary loan. There are, indeed, real friends of the Middle Ages and the early modern age in our library. I could not do it without you! Thank you.

I dedicate this book, once again, to the love and companion in my life, my wife Carolyn! What would I be without her? My life would be like a game of backgammon, for instance, without the necessary partner.

Christa Agnes Tuczay

Medieval Magicians as Entertainers: Magic as Demonic Illusion or Stagecraft

Introduction

The British film *The Prestige* (Cristopher Nolan 2006), adapted from Christopher Priest's award-winning novel of 1995, depicts the rivalry between two stage magicians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They enter a deadly competition, being obsessed with creating the best *prestige*, or illusion on stage. The film also explains science as paralleling magic: engineering "wizards" Nikola Tesla and Thomas Edison are engaged in a rivalry over electrical currents. It is the staged competition, however, that is relevant for my paper, in two ways. First, the tale tradition, containing the literary motif of the sorcerers' competition "played" to an audience, can be traced back well into antiquity. Second, a variety of sources ascribe the *prestige* to the glamour, or illusion, the magicians employ as a mainframe of their presentation of supernatural help.¹

Originally, a *prestige* or prestidigitation, derived from the Latin *praestigium*,² referred to pomposity, which was taken as a sign of poor taste. The root of the word "prestige" means a delusion or a trick. Since antiquity, it has been popular among sceptics of all proveniences to argue that various magical practices and traditions are based on conscious fraud – a deliberate manipulation of the ignorant masses by quacks and charlatans using various ruses to dupe their followers.

From late antiquity onwards, however, illusions were associated with demonic activities. Magicians and diviners were suspected of employing unclean spirits for their own advantage, most often to obtain results normal human agency could not achieve. Be it with demonical aid or skill in natural science, to gain the necessary attention one always needed the most sensational presentation. At

1 See David Rollo, *Glamorous Sorcery: Magic and Literacy in the High Middle Ages* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press 2000). Cf. Michael D. Bailey, "The Meanings of Magic," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 1 (2006): 1–23.

2 See Eli Edward Buriss, "The Terminology of Witchcraft," *Classical Philology* 2 (1936): 137–45. There was a long tradition of naming *magia praestigiatoria* as one of the formal branches of magic and it always concerned visual effects.

some point, the presentation became more important than what was being presented.³

This paper will survey the assumption that magic in its performative and audience-bound aspect is to a good extent stagecraft, and hence needs and plays to an audience. At some point the stage performance became independent and was part of various contexts and environments.

I. Prestige, or Magic, Throughout History

The modern West is not only indebted to the Greco-Roman world for the word “magic” and many of its semantic applications, but we have also inherited from antiquity the conflict between magic as a specious show, as prestidigitation, and magic as a peculiar power mostly dependent on a third agency who endowed the magician with his/her abilities to achieve real effects for both good and bad aims.⁴

The fourth story of the Papyrus Westcar discusses the exploits of the Pharaoh Cheops, builder of the Great Pyramid at Giza around 2600 B.C.E.⁵ In the papyrus, Cheops calls upon his sons to bring to him a magician known as Dedi. According to the story, Dedi comes to Cheops’s court to stage some magical performances. Presumably seventy years old, he showed the Pharaoh stunning illusions. He performed three decapitations, severing the heads of a goose, duck, and ox, and subsequently restoring the slaughtered beasts to life. When asked by Cheops to perform the same feat on a man, however, Dedi refused.

³ On the remodelling of stage-magic in the nineteenth century, see Karl Bell, “Remaking Magic: The ‘Wizard of the North’ and Contested Magical Mentalities in the Mid-Nineteenth Century Magic Show,” *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 4 (2009): 26–51.

⁴ Mathew Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge 2001); Naomi Janowitz, *Magic in the Roman World: Pagans, Jews, Christians* (London: Routledge 2001); *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press 1999); *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Biblical and Pagan Societies*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press 2001); Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. Franklin Philip (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1997); *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Collection of Ancient Texts*, trans., annot., and intro. by Georg Luck, 2nd ed. (1985; Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), focuses on literary sources.

⁵ Aylard M. Blackman, *The Story of King Kheops and the Magicians: Transcribed from Papyrus Westcar (Berlin Papyrus 3033)* (Reading: J. V. Books, 1988); cf. *Die Märchen des Papyrus Westcar*, ed. Adolf Erman. *Mittheilungen aus den orientalischen Sammlungen*, 5 (Berlin: Speman 1890), 11; A. H. Gardiner, “Professional Magicians in Ancient Egypt,” *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 39 (1917): 31–44.

Edwin Dawes believes this indicates that Dedi did not have the necessary apparatus for such a complicated illusion.⁶ Such an explanation seems to interpret Dedi's performance along lines similar to modern "prestige" magic shows. This seems problematic, however, as it requires us to assume that ancient wonder-workers, shamans, and ritual specialist deliberately deceived their audience in the same way modern stage magicians do. This *interpretatio Christiana* obstructs the actual historical context. That is not to say, however, that there were no magical impostors in ancient times. Obviously, the audience would have appreciated an entertaining competition, even if their favoured party did not win.

A similar judgment was rendered by the Christian presbyter Saint Hippolytus of Rome (second century C.E.). He left an enormous number of writings dealing with diverse subjects, including polemical works directed against pagans, Jews, and heretics. The fourth book of a polemic ascribed to him,⁷ the *Refutation of All Heresies*, is mainly intended to denigrate sorcery. Interestingly, he preserves magicians' tricks and illusions for posterity.⁸ Hippolytus's aim was to be a myth buster and debunker. As Georg Luck and others have made clear, because his information derived from very different sources, he might have misunderstood some technical details.⁹ Hippolytus's long list of tricks used by magicians and heretics to deceive their audience and followers includes the biblical description of how the priests of Baal tried to dupe the spectators during their contest with Elijah.

More generally, he alludes to an impressive set of sophisticated techniques to create a fraudulent impression of magical and miraculous feats. For example, to make a statue or an image speak you drill a hole through it, insert the windpipe of a long-necked bird and speak into the pipe from a hidden place behind

⁶ Edwin Dawes, *The Great Illusionists* (Secaucus, NJ: Chartwell Books, 1979), 15; 36; Verena Lepper, *Untersuchungen zu Papyrus Westcar: Eine philologische und literaturwissenschaftliche (Neu-)Analyse*. Ägyptologische Abhandlungen, 70 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), 41–65, 101–10, 174–180.

⁷ K. F. Hermann, for instance, thought it derived from the treatise attacking Christianity by Celsus, *True Word* (written 185–232 C.E.), to which Origen had responded in his *Contra Celsum*, see online version at www.newadvent.org/fathers/04161.htm, 1. 68, 2.55, 3.33, 3.50, 3.55, 5.38, 5.51 (last accessed on Nov. 15, 2018).

⁸ Hippolytus, *Philosophumena or the Refutation of All Heresies*, trans. F. Legge, 2 vols. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1921); *Des heiligen Hippolytus von Rom Widerlegung aller Häresien (Philosophumena)*, trans. Konrad Preysing (Munich: Kösel, 1922), lib. VI, 145–57; *The Refutation of All Heresies*, trans. with an intro. and notes by M. David Litwa (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2016).

⁹ Cf. Georg Luck, "Witches and Sorcerers," *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe*, vol. 2: *Ancient Greece and Rome* (see note 4), 153–54.

the statue.¹⁰ Obviously, he did not intend to present a manual for magicians in training; rather he sought to expose their fraudulent and deceptive intentions. We learn how a magician can create the impression of a house on fire, how to stick one's hands into pitch without being harmed, and so forth. Various operations, such as producing thunder, are based on chemical processes. He even considered walking on coals without being burned to be a trick. His overemphasis on the rationalistic perspective is in itself an interesting aspect of his polemic.

One frequently cited Old Testament example of magical action not only features staged miracles but also frames them as a competition. Egyptian sorcerers could seemingly perform metamorphoses; for example, Pharaoh's magicians, Jannes and Jambres, transformed their rods into animals. Witnesses thought that the Egyptian sorcerers in Exodus 7–9 were experts at prestige. Their antagonist was Moses, the greatest miracle worker in the Old Testament.¹¹ His actions also had a show-like quality, and quite often employed the proverbial magical wand. In his competition with Pharaoh's magicians he transformed his staff into a snake (Ex. 4:2–3), when he struck the Nile with his staff it turned into blood (Ex. 7:15–18), he opened the Red Sea with his staff (Ex. 14:13–31), and he caused drinking water to flow from a rock by touching it with his rod (Ex. 17:6). None of these deeds was a prestige, rather they were considered demonstrations of God's power. But the magicians' powers were limited. They were unable to perform the final task of causing the dust of the earth to turn into lice, as God's servants had done, so they were defeated. The Bible does not inform us whether the present officials were amused or thrilled, so it only serves as an example of magic as illusion, not prestige as entertainment. Thus, while in their effects miracles and marvels worked by magicians and saints could appear similar or even identical, the source of their operation was radically different.

A satirical example illustrating the success of wonderworkers or miracle workers against the charlatan Alexander of Abonuteichos is provided by Lu-

10 Lucian of Samosata, *Alexander of Abonoteichos*, trans. A. M. Harmon (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), 26; Hippolytus, *Refutation* 4.28.9 and 4.41.2 (see note 8).

11 Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian. The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996; Robert Michael Braman, "The Problem of Magic in Ancient Israel," Ph.D. diss., Drew University, Madison, NJ, 1989; Martin Buber, *Schriften zur Bibel* (Munich: Kösel, 1964). *On the Bible: Eighteen Studies*, ed. Nahum Norbert Glatzer (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1982). See also Victor H. Matthews, "Moses," *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition*, ed. Richard C. Golden et al. 4 vols. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 3: 788–89. John Gager, "Moses the Magician: Hero of an Ancient Counter-Culture?" *Helios* 21 (1994): 179–88; and id., "Moses and Magic," John Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1972), 134–61.

cian.¹² The story is based on historical reality. This man invented a new serpent cult and appointed himself chief priest. The naïve inhabitants of Abonuteichos built sanctuaries for him. His success was based mainly on his practical experience as a traveling magician.¹³ Tertullian informs us about itinerant magicians, the circulators, and mentions them in four passages. Their magic is of the spectacular variety and they did all kinds of tricks that are still common in stage magic today, aimed at public entertainment.¹⁴

In the early Christian period between the birth of the new religion and the appearance of a Christian Empire under Constantine, magic and miracle were often in competition, but more in a dramatic, almost sporting event than as joyful entertainment. The most famous magician in early Christian testimony was undoubtedly Simon Magus. Hippolytus of Rome in his *Philosophumena* (vi, vii–xx) relates in detail how Simon operated successfully in Rome and won over many with his magic arts, but his reputation was greatly diminished by the efforts of the two Apostles, whereupon the number of his followers began to shrink.¹⁵

The often-depicted fall of Simon Magus focused particularly on his demonic helpers. Whether the *Acts of Peter* accurately portray the real Simon Magus and his activities in Rome is to be doubted, for by the time the *Acts* were written, Simon's feats in Rome had long become a Christian myth. According to the *Acts* Simon not only engaged in spectacular public performances for the masses but also performed private shows in Roman households. It is perhaps deliberately left unclear whether Simon performed séances in which spirits were questioned or optical illusions created.¹⁶ In the Greek *Constitutiones Apostolorum*, Simon announced his flight in the theater. It was obviously meant as a magic show, as a spectacle to draw and entertain the masses. "The people applauded him as a god, but Peter stretched forth his hands to heaven, supplicating God through the Lord Jesus to dash down the corrupter and curtail the power of the demons. The final duel between the Apostles Peter and Simon Magus took place at the Forum Romanum before the Roman elite. In that period, magic was openly performed in theaters, temples, and public squares to make a thrilling show for the people. When the audience watched Simon's fall caused by St.

¹² Lucian of Samosata, Alexander of Abonuteichos (see note 10).

¹³ Cf. Valerie Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1991), 97.

¹⁴ Dickie, *Magic in Greco-Roman World* (note 4), 218–20.

¹⁵ *The refutation of all Heresies* (see note 8), 391–92.

¹⁶ Dickie, *Magic in Greco-Roman World* (note 4), 197.

Peter's prayers they were not at all amused, and one source reports that the disappointed emperor Nero took his revenge on the apostle.¹⁷

Christians were regularly confronted with the problem of how to differentiate themselves and their miracles from pagan competitors. That is why sources stress that the apostles performed their miracles without any dramatic show-like effects and often in modest company. From this point of view, Peter engages in competition over resurrection, but does not attempt to impress the Romans by demonstrating that he can also fly. To do so would have been to perform a trick and thus equate himself with a magician. There is also an important qualitative difference between resurrecting and flying.¹⁸ During the long theological discussion about the contrast between true religion and the falsehood of paganism, particularly pagan magic, Christian thinkers defended Moses, Christ, St. Peter and other biblical figures against the accusation they were mere stage magicians who wanted to draw the attention of the masses. The Christian argument was simply to contrast true power with false power, or true miracle with *daemonum praestigiae*. It was understood that pagan magicians possessed powers by operating with demons, but their art was deluding and lacked value.¹⁹ From the ninth century on, hagiographical literature increasingly told of competitive contests between saints and magicians. Indeed, the first type of early medieval stories with the competition motif is employed in legends of saints.²⁰

II. (Demonic) Illusions in Christian Commentaries

Theological interpretations of demonic and staged illusions were clearly understood as diabolical intervention. In the early Middle Ages, Christian writers followed the same line of argumentation, identifying magic with illusion and *praestigium*, as the Cynics and Epicureans did in antiquity.²¹ The fundamental

17 Lynn Thorndike, *The History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 8 vols. Vols. 3–6. History of Science New Series, 4 (vols. 3–8, New York: Columbia University Press, vols. 1–2, Mac Millan, 1923–1964), 1: 416–27, here 422. In general, see Jan N. Bremmer, “Magic in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles,” *Metamorphoses of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer and Jan Veenstra. Groningen Studies in Cultural Change, 1 (Leuven and Paris: Peeters, 2002), 51–70; here 65.

18 Cf. Bremmer, “Magic in the Apocryphic Acts of the Apostles” (see note 17), 70.

19 Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1978), 426–29.

20 Cf. Heinrich Günther, *Psychologie der Legende: Studien zu einer wissenschaftlichen Heiligen-Geschichte* (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 1949), 177–78.

21 Cf. Richard Gordon, “Imagining Greek and Roman Magic,” *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe*, Vol. 2: *Ancient Greece and Rome* (see note 4), 159–276; here 218.

difference is that Christian authors aimed to defend Christ's and his followers' miracles against, for instance, the Jewish counterclaim that they were merely prestige.²² The notably early Christian apologist Tertullian (ca. 155–230) made this point quite clearly: "Moreover, if sorcerers call forth ghosts, and even make what seem to be the souls of the dead appear, if they put boys to death in order to get a response from the oracle; if, with their juggling illusions they make pretence of doing various miracles."²³ The above-mentioned treatise of Saint Hippolytus against all heresies reports in detail how magicians achieved their marvels by deceiving the eyes of the beholders, assisted by the fact that they held their performances mostly in darkened rooms.²⁴

The prime authority on the doctrine of magic and later witchcraft during the Christian Middle Ages was Aurelius Augustine (354–430), the most influential of the Latin Church Fathers,²⁵ who had a profound impact on the whole of medieval theology, and demonology. Augustine's schooling in ancient Latin literature exposed him to Neoplatonic thought, which distinguished between gods, good demons, and evil ones. Miracles are created both by God and by demons, but there are three categories of wonderworkers: first, magicians who have summoned and entered into pacts with demons; second, good Christians who depend on God's help to work miracles; and third, evil Christians and heretics who rely

²² Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (note 19), 124–26.

²³ Tertullian, *Apology* 1.23.1, trans. Sydney Thelwall. Loeb Classical Library, 250 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977). His polemics against Hermogenes, a painter who founded his own cult, were famous.

²⁴ He also refers in detail to the construction of the favourite medieval instrument of divination, the oracular head: "The skull itself is made out of the caul of an ox fashioned into the requisite shape by means of Etruscan wax and prepared gum; when covered in parchment it resembles a skull, which seems to all the spectators to speak. The voice of the head is achieved through the wind-pipe of a crane that is attached to the skull and by this means the accomplice can speak." Jürgen Hammerstaedt, *Die Orakelkritik des Kynikers Oenomaus* (Frankfurt a. M.: Athenäum Verlag, 1988), 11–40, referring to *Refutation of All Heresies* (see note 8), 4, 41 126.22–27.

²⁵ Claude Jenkins, "Saint Augustine and Magic," *Science, Medicine, and History: Essays on the Evolution of Scientific Thought and Medical Practice Written in Honour of Charles Singer*, 2 vols., ed. E. A. Underwood (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 1:131–40; Peter Brown, "Sorcery, Demons and the Rise of Christianity: From Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages," *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations*, ed. Mary Douglas. Routledge Library Editions: Anthropology and Ethnography (1970; London: Routledge, 2006), 17–45; Dieter Harmening, *Superstitio: Überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologiegeschichtlichen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1979), 33–40, 52–55, 82–85, 109–11, and 184–88; Thomas Linsenmann, *Die Magie bei Thomas von Aquin* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2000), 31–98.

on God but are not followers of Christ.²⁶ He did not mention but surely he may have encountered the sleight-of-hand artists at the market places, the jugglers. After Augustine's fundamental exegesis, Christian authorities generally agreed that no magical performance occurred via magicians' own skills, but rather with the aid of demons and their illusory arts.²⁷

After Augustine, one of the most influential early medieval writers, globally speaking, was Isidore of Seville (560–636), who introduced Aristotelian thinking to his contemporaries. In the eighth book of his *summa* of all knowledge, the *Etymologies*, he dealt with belief and superstition. Especially in the ninth chapter of this book he fulminates against the evildoings of magicians. *Praestigium* has been invented by Mercurius and is equated with blinding the pupil of the eye (*praestringere oculos*).²⁸ Isidore's short but meaningful statement could be seen as a rational explanation for illusions.²⁹

More than 600 years later, one of the most brilliant scientists of the Middle Ages, Roger Bacon (1214–1292), strongly opposed most branches of magic. Nevertheless, he came to be reputed as a magician himself, especially in sixteenth-century legendary material. Causes for the legends lie in the extensive treatment of magic in his writings, and his experiments in optics. In Oxford he composed his *De mirabile potestate artis et naturae* (On the Marvelous Power of Magic and Nature), an extensive letter addressed to William of Auvergne or John of Basingstoke. In this treatise, Bacon makes the important distinction between magic that works by suggestion and natural science. For him, a juggler was a *praestigiator* and “prestiges” would have been the term used by his contemporaries for the visual deceptions they caused³⁰; prestige might involve anything from high-class illusion to low class duping, providing the crucial elements of artifice and imposture were present. Presumably he was referring to beholders (at the court or market places) who were stunned by the spectacular show that was performed for them to hold them in fright, their anxiety slowly turning to pleasure

26 Valerie Flint, “The Demonization of Magic and Sorcery in Late Antiquity: Christian Redefinitions of Pagan Religions,” *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome* (see note 3), 277–348; here 327.

27 Jenkins, “Saint Augustine and Magic” (see note 39), 131–40.

28 Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies*, trans. Stephen E. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 8.9.33., p.183.

29 Harmening, *Superstitio* (note 25), 98–115; Charles Edward Hopkins, “The Share of Thomas Aquinas in the Growth of the Witchcraft Delusion,” Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1940.

30 On the history of the term and its implications, see Philip Butterworth, *Magic on the Early English Stage* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 7–25.

as they became spectators of a thrilling show without diabolical intervention. Following Kieckhefer,

Roger Bacon and Marsilio Ficino both expressed disdain for the sleight of hand, ventriloquism, and illusions of performative magicians and obviously observed that many of their contemporaries found pleasure and amusement in the new magic shows devoid of diabolical influence. Neither Bacon nor Ficino was writing specifically about magicians at court, and we can perhaps assume that the performers who go to court had more sophisticated versions of the tricks performed at the market places. ... At times indeed the “illusions” enacted at court seem to have involved elaborate and expensive staging of entertainments, done very much by craft rather than through necromancy.³¹

It is obvious that the audiences in the European courts and the spectators at the markets liked conjuring and juggling. “What might be enjoyed at court or in the houses of the aristocracy was not to be recommended for the general population. After the Reformation, popular illusionary practices for gain and entertainment were increasingly condemned as deviant by the social critics of the day, who saw them as immoral, even demonic, ‘cozening’. In France, the attack fell typically on the “joueurs de passe” – players with cups and balls – whose deceptions were the subject of Hieronymus Bosch’s famous painting “The Conjurer” (ca. 1502).³²

In Geoffrey Chaucer’s “Franklin’s Tale,” contained in his *Canterbury Tales* (ca. 1400), a magician projects animated pictures in a large hall. The audience is fascinated by hunting scenes, tournaments, and court dances.³³ With a clap of his hands the magician can switch the show on or off.³⁴ The magic tricks in

31 Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge Medieval Textbooks (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 100.

32 See below, chap. III; cf. also Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Modern European Culture* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 82.

33 Magical dances are also described by Raoul de Houdenc in his *Méragis de Portlesguez*, ed. Martin Friedwanger, vol. I (Halle a.d. S.: Max Niemeyer, 1897); and recently, Raoul de Houdenc, *Méragis de Portlesguez: roman arthurien du XIIIe siècle*, publié d’après le manuscrit de la Bibliothèque du Vatican, pub., trad., prés. et notes par Michelle Szkilnik (Paris: Champion, 2004) v. 3675–77. Méragis finds his friend in a magical dance, pulls him out but is drawn into the dance himself and subsequently forgets everything. Cf. Alexander Haggerty Krappe, “Über die Episode des Château des Caroées im Méragis de Portlesguez,” *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache* 57 (1933): 156–62.

34 Laura Hibbard Loomis, “Secular Dramatics in the Royal Palace, Paris 1378, 1389 and Chaucer Tregetours,” *Speculum* 33 (1958): 242–55.

Chaucer's "Franklin's Tale" can be paralleled to contemporary entertainment carried out at famous Burgundian courts.³⁵

III. Fright or Pleasure: The Role of the Audience in the Classification of Magical Marvels in Medieval Romances

Like ecclesiastical writers, authors of medieval romances also seized upon magical topics, thus illustrating the conflict between Christian religion and demonical magic in their own poetical thinking. Famous figures include the Roman poet Virgil, depicted as a grand constructor of technical devices and as a necromancer,³⁶ like Klingsor in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* (ca. 1205). That physical science was regarded as a miracle or a diabolical art by the ignorant is the real issue the author of the romance of *Perceforest* seems to be discussing. The magician Aroés bedazzles his subjects with heavenly and hellish visions, thus promoting his godlike image, and in the poet's eyes he represents the vice of *superbia* or vanity. The aim of the deception is to make his subjects aboul-ic.³⁷ So, the effect on the public is fright and terror, but the magic is eventually exposed by the knight Gadifer as a series of slick optical tricks with the help of a magical ring.³⁸ The knight is able to perceive all objects in their true form. When

35 See Jan R. Veenstra, *Magic and Divination at the Courts of Burgundy and France: Text and Context of Lasrens Pignon's Contre les devineurs (1411)*. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 83 (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1997), 92–93; Kaitlin Coats, "'Artes that Been Curious': Questions of Magic and Morality in Chaucer's 'The Franklin's Tale,'" *Criterion: A Journal of Literary Criticism* 6.1 (2013): 25–36; here 29.

36 John Webster Spargo, *Virgil the Necromancer: Studies in Virgilian Legends* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934).

37 Jeanne Lods, *Le roman de Perceforest, Origines – Composition – Caractères – valeur et influence*. Société de publications romanes et françaises, 32 (Geneva: Droz, 1951), 102.

38 The unveiling ring appears in several medieval literary accounts, such as in *Laurin*, *Walberan*, and *Ortnit*. See *Biterolf und Dietleib* [which includes *Laurin und Walberan*], ed. Oskar Jänicke, mit Benutzung der von Franz Roth gesammelten Abschriften und Vergleichen. *Deutsches Heldenbuch*, 1. Deutsche Neudrucke. Reihe Texte d. Mittelalters (1866; Berlin and Zürich: Weidmann, 1963), 1236–84, 1285–1387, 1485–1599; and *Walberan* (445–610); *Ortnit und Wolfdietrich A*, ed. Walter Kofler (Stuttgart: S. Hirzel Verlag, 2014), 140–50, 240–49.

he looks at the magician's impressive construction, he sees an endless row of phials reflecting the light just as modern magicians use mirrors³⁹ for their tricks.

The same line of argument is pursued by the author of the *Prose Lancelot* (ca. 1250), where the tale is interspersed with numerous illusions: lakes, beasts, and other apparitions are caused by the devil but can be revealed by a magic ring or, more conveniently, a voice from heaven declaring that the vision is not a demonical illusion at all.⁴⁰ Although it is not yet understood as entertainment for an audience but as a deliberate and purposeful deception, it can be interpreted as unassertive renunciation of the theological explanation that all illusions are the devil's work.

Although sorcerers and sorceresses like Morgan la Faye, Roaz, and Klingsor acquire their magical abilities via a pact with the devil,⁴¹ this aspect does not seem to matter significantly, at least not in classical courtly literature. Interestingly, the real evil magicians like Roaz in *Wigalois* (1210/20)⁴² and others are not to be looked upon as stage workers and therefore do not communicate or play to an audience. Of a different kind is the fairy Meliur in Konrad of Würzburg's romance *Partonopier and Meliur* (ca. 1285/90). Although suspected by Partonopier to be a demon and deeply feared by his mother and the bishop to be a devil, she proves to be a Christian lady with magical skills that she occasionally employs as a pastime pleasure. This heiress is well-educated, knows all books, stones and herbs, all writings of the prophets, astronomy, and magic and hence she can perform astonishing tricks if necessary. And if her father wants to be amused, he sends for her to produce all sort of illusions. She entertains

39 Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680), who published a celebrated book about optics in the seventeenth century, was eager to explain the illusion of metamorphosis by an arrangement of mirrors. Kircher constructed a device that made it possible to see nine metamorphoses in the Museo Kircheriano. The machine he used had the best effect when in a darkened room, the mirrors carefully arranged. Athanasius Kircher, *Ars magna et lucis et umbrae* (Rome: Hermann Scheus, 1646); Heron of Alexandria, for instance, the builder of automata, worked with mirrors. Rita Amedick, "Wasserspiele, Uhren und Automaten mit Figuren in der Antike," *Automaten in Kunst und Literatur des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Klaus Grubmüller and Markus Stock (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), 9–48; in the same anthology, see Ulrich Ernst, "Zauber – Technik – Imagination: Zur Darstellung von Automaten in der Erzählliteratur des Mittelalters," 115–72, and Helmut Flachenecker, "Automaten und lebende Bilder in der höfischen Kultur des Spätmittelalters," 173–96; see also Clark, *Vanities* (note 32), 103–94.

40 *Lancelot*, ed. Reinhold Kluge, 3 vols. *Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters*, 42, 47, 63 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1995), I: 20, 58, 59–62.

41 See Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 111–12 (see note 31); Christa Agnes Tuczay, *Magie und Magier im Mittelalter* (Munich: Diederichs, 1992; and Munich: DTV, 2003), 105–20.

42 Wirt von Gravenberg, *Wigalois*, ed. Johannes Marie Neele Kapteyn, trans. Sabine Seelbach und Ulrich Seelbach (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), vv. 3607–750, 4658–735.

him by showing lions, boars, griffins, elephants, and other animals as well as *merwunder* (monstrous sea creatures), but also illusions of mountains, forests, water, and heaths or a tournament or a battle between one or two thousand knights.⁴³ What she performs solely for her father became not only in the courtly romances but also in real life an audience-centered art and stagecraft.

The Franciscan William of Rubruck (1215/20–1270) relates of his journey to Mangu Khan's court in Karakorum only a few years before the famous travels of Marco Polo⁴⁴ that he saw a sort of medieval soda fountain in the form of a silver tree. Four lions sat at the roots with mare's milk flowing from their mouths. In the hollow tree leather bellows led to sculptured serpents with wine, mead and rice wine.⁴⁵ So many automatons obviously had the purpose to keep people well provided for.

The *artes mechanicae* as imitation of nature are also and often defined as the art of certain magicians. They are presented in an ideal courtly space repeatedly called a terrestrial paradise. In Herbort of Fritzlar's *liet von troye* (1190/1200) a hall full of moving statues is presented with mechanical birds on a golden tree. Most of these spaces are extraordinary special rooms that cause supernatural effects such as healing illness.⁴⁶

In the context of courtly romance, the automatons serve other purposes but increase the comfort of life and relaxation: Herbort comments about the queen Candacis and her automaton: "Ih wil û sagen mêre ... wî ir spil was getân / sô si ze mûse solde gân" (I will tell you more about it: how their game was designed for entertainment and amusement),⁴⁷ at Candacis's palace in the *Straßburger Alexander* and also in Priamus's hall in Konrad von Würzburg's *Trojanerkrieg* (ca. 1280).⁴⁸ These artificial paradisiacal settings with astounding technical devices point clearly to the ambivalence of technology and mechanics, which are not

⁴³ Konrad von Würzburg, *Partonopier und Meliur*, ed. Karl Bartsch (1871; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970), vv. 8064–253.

⁴⁴ Marco Polo mentions that the Great Khan's magicians are able to levitate the drinking vessels. Cf. Marco Polo, *Il Milione: Die Wunder Welt*, trans. Elis Guignard (Zürich: Manesse Verlag, 1983), 116–17.

⁴⁵ Wilhelm von Rubruck, *Reise zu den Mongolen 1253–1255*, trans. Friedrich Risch. Veröffentlichungen des Forschungsinstituts für vergleichende Religionsgeschichte an der Universität Leipzig, II, 13 (Leipzig: Deichert, 1934), 158–60.

⁴⁶ Herbort von Fritzlar, *Liet von Troye*, ed. Georg K. Frommann (1837; Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1966), v. 9377.

⁴⁷ Der Pfaffe Lamprecht, *Das Alexanderlied [Straßburger Alexander]*, ed. Irene Ruttman (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974), v. 5063.

⁴⁸ Konrad von Würzburg, *Der Trojanische Krieg*, ed. Adelbert von Keller. Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins Stuttgart, 44 (Stuttgart: Literarischer Verein, 1858).

precisely distinguished from magic. Automaton are often considered a product of magic and are not primarily manufactured by architects, technicians, or engineers, but their use and function are not restricted to magical purposes only – often the automaton made by magicians are showpieces of sovereigns who present them within their courtly rituals and festivals without being in the service of black or white magic, maleficium or beneficium. Konrad of Würzburg's *Trojaner-kieg* describes a music automaton in Priamus's palace. The huge hall where hundred knights could be housed is made of the finest materials: an artificial tree made of precious jewels, rubies, and emeralds. On the trees singing birds produce a marvelous sound, putting the audience in a festive mood:

die selben glanzen vöglin
 diu wâren des betwungen
 mit listen, daz si sunge
 den winter und die sumerzît
 ir stimme lûte enwîderstrît
 den liuten in diu ôren clanc
 swer dâ gehôrte ir sîezen sanc
 dem wart vil hôher muot gegeben
 sie stuonden sam si kunden leben
 und heten wunncelichen braht
 seht, alsô wâren si gemaht
 von nigromantie. (v. 17582–603)

[The same illustrious birds were animated by magic to sing during winter and summer. Their resounding songs were heard and appreciated by the people, and whoever listened became cheerful. The birds looked as if they were alive and were artfully made by necromancy (that is the black arts).]

In *Wolfdietrich D*,⁴⁹ the birds of such a marvelous tree are worked by bellows inside the hollow linden tree. When they start to sing, *Wolfdietrich* is so enchanted while enjoying his meal that he forgets to eat. In another variant of *Wolfdietrich*, the scene shows a huge table at which thousand knights are dining. When the king orders that the bird on the tree operated with bellows start to sing, it serves as background music to a festive meal. In the Vulgate version of the *Rosengarten D*,⁵⁰ *Krîmhild* has a magic linden tree in her garden and invites her guests to enjoy the singing of the artificial birds. The sound of the birds is described as

49 *Ortnit und die Wolfdietriche*, ed. Arthur Amelung and Oskar Jänike (1871; Dublin and Berlin: Weidmann, 1968).

50 *Die Gedichte vom Rosengarten zu Worms*, ed. Georg Holz (1893; Hildesheim: Olms 1982).

heavenly and the count praises the place as paradise in which he wanted to stay forever:

Ez enwart nie herze so trûric, daz der kurzewîle verdrôz.
 Ir hât hie ûf erden ein ganzen himelrîch
 môht ich darinne belîben, die wîle ich leben mac
 mir wære bî diesen vrouwen ein ganz jâr als ein kurzer tac.⁵¹

[None would have been so sad, that he would not appreciate amusement. You have paradise here on earth. I wanted to stay here all my life and a whole year on the side of these women would be like a short day.]

If we look at the progress that was achieved by the *artes mechanicae* and its linkage with the *artes magicae*, one can assume the magic developed into a sister science of mechanics and is defined as focussing human research on the perceivable world in order to control threatening natural occurrences. Magic was not only frightening but also delightful and amusing in the form of automats. “Das höfische Vergnügen an mechanischen Wundern mutierte gleichzeitig zu einer Zurschaustellung der eigenen Macht. Der Besitz von Automaten bzw. die Möglichkeit, diese herstellen zu lassen, bildete einen Bestandteil der die Herrschaft umgebenden Aura” (Courtly delight in mechanical marvels mutated to a demonstration of the own power. The possession of automata or the opportunity to have them produced was an integral component of the hegemonial aura).⁵²

Verelst distinguishes two types and two generations of these epic sorcerers.⁵³ In the first generation they operate in the background in the service of the hero or his counterparts. Nevertheless, their activities are of importance for the plot because they stage spectacular incidents or set comical accents. As magicians, they are skilled in conjuring tricks, sleeping potions and magic, the opening of padlocks, and are well-versed spies and more or less remind us of Ethan Hunt in “Mission Impossible” or McGyver.

Exponents of the second type present themselves in the limelight, and in this context a very interesting magician has to be mentioned in detail: Malagis or Maugis. The medieval romance with the protagonist Maugis,⁵⁴ depicted as a

51 *Die Gedichte vom Rosengarten zu Worms* (see note 50), stanza 29.

52 Flachenecker, “Automaten und lebende Bilder” (see note 39).

53 Philippe Verelst, “Renaut de Montauban, textes apparentés et versions étrangères: essai de bibliografie (additions et complément 1981–1987),” *Olifant* 12.2 (1987): 125–44.

54 Cf. Karin Lichtblau, “Maugis,” *Verführer Schurken Magier*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Werner Wunderlich. *Mythen des Mittelalters*, 3 (St. Gall: UVK Fachverlag für Wissenschaft und Studium, 2001), 613–28; Albrecht Classen, “Magic in Late Medieval German Literature,” *Magic and Magicians in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Time: The Occult in Pre-Modern Sciences, Medicine,*

knight sorcerer, relative and new ally of the *Haymonskinder*⁵⁵ first appears around 1200 in the French chanson de geste *Renaut de Montauban* or *Les Quatre fils d'Aymon*. The chanson is classified as a “renegade” geste with the main topic of a feudal conflict between Charlemagne and his vassals. The tradition of the *Haymonskinder* was common not only in France but also in the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Italy, England, and Scandinavia until the nineteenth century. In *Renaut de Montauban*,⁵⁶ Maugis is only a minor character and introduced as a relative of Renaut and his brothers who is skilled in magic. After some adventures, Maugis comes to the fore and advances to be Charlemagne’s true antagonist. His magical skills become more pronounced, accented, and elaborate, as does their comical and entertaining aspect. It is no surprise that due to the fascination with the text in the first half of the thirteenth century, Maugis advances as a protagonist and receives a chanson of his own.

His biography is also significant: the orphan Maugis grows up at the fairy Oriande’s court, is taught magic by the sorcerer Baudris, and receives further instructions in Toledo, the alleged center of medieval magic. He is not aware of his ancestry until the fairy reveals his origin, whereupon he sets off to find his parents. In this quest he wins the marvellous horse Bayard and the sword Froberge. After many adventures he eventually meets his heathen brother Vivien, from whom he had been separated at birth. As he does not know his twin, he fights with him and also competes with his brother’s sorcerer Noiron. After a violent combat, which ends inconclusively, the brothers discover their true identity and reconcile, and they even agree to search together for their parents.

Literature, Religion, and Astrology. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 20 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter 2017), 523–46; Kathleen Jarchow, “Magic at the Margins: The Mystification of Maugis D’Aigremont,” *ibid.*, 439–73. Elly Rachel Truitt, *Medieval Robots, Mechanism, Magic, Nature, and Art*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 40–68. Just recently has appeared Adrienne Mayor, *Gods and Robots: The Ancient Quest for Artificial Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018); see also Albrecht Classen, “Disrupted Festivities in Medieval Courtly Literature: Poetic Reflections on the Social and Ethical Decline in *Mauritius von Craûn*, The Stricker’s *Daniel von dem blühenden Tal*, and Heinrich Wittenwiler’s *Ring*,” *Neophilologus* 100.1 (2016): 87–104

⁵⁵ Here it is not possible to provide more than a small selection of the vast body of literature on the *Haymonskinder*. Cf. Johann II. von Simmern, *Die Haymonskinder*, ed. Werner Wunderlich. Frühe Neuzeit, 35 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1997); Philipp Verlest, “Renaut de Montauban, textes apparentés et versions étrangères: essai de bibliographie,” *Romanica Gandensia* 18 (1981): 199–231;

⁵⁶ *Renaut de Montauban oder die Haymonskinder*, ed. Heinrich Michelant. Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins Stuttgart, 67 (1862; Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1966).

Maugis occupies a special place in the group of medieval sorcerers. As a marginal character he embodies the type of “larron enchanteur,” the trickster magician. This type is not related to an epoch but turns up casually in the *chanson de gestes* and is originally a Germanic type of sorcerer that gained its peculiar implementation through the influence of the Arthurian romances. The magicians of this type are not only skilled in magic, but are also very intelligent, clever, and cunning. When in French literature they are named *larrons*, meaning “thieves,” it does not have a negative connotation, but is a title of honor like the master thief. They manage to steal their enemies’ treasures and thus succeed in getting them ridiculed and a laughing stock.

Finally, Maugis conquers the center stage in the *geste* named after him: *Maugis d'Aigremont*.⁵⁷ His favorite *modus operandi* is inducing sleep by means of magic: being a good herbalist, he uses it not only for healing purposes but also for deception. He can change his appearance to spy in Charlemagne’s household. In *Renaut de Montauban*, his skills oscillate between tricks and demonic magic. Tricks are used to show him as a master thief who has Robin Hood characteristics, stealing only from Charlemagne’s treasures. Far beyond mere tricks are his skills in *Maugis d'Aigremont* and in the later *Renaut* version. A good example is the siege of Aigremont by the Saracens under the lead of Vivien. With the help of his unknown twin brother’s sorcerer Noiron, the heathens are able to raid the town. Noiron opens the door and the people under siege fear the whole town will fall. Maugis holds back the enemy by producing the image of giant fortifications. Both sorcerers start a competitive battle by conjuring up illusions. While Maugis’s troops are made to believe they are drowning, he protects them by fooling the enemy with illusions of a blaze. When Noiron struggles in vain to get the upper hand, even the abduction of Maugis by the devil does not bring the desired result, so he sees his last strategy fail utterly. The instantly conjured up snake does not help him either to gain victory; it attacks Maugis, and Noiron is trapped in his enemies’ camp.

The late medieval versions of the Maugis story not only change the protagonist’s name to Malagis but also enhance his role and describe his education as a master magician in detail. The Dutch version broadly elaborates how the young Malagis first clandestinely reads the grimoires of his foster father Baudris and is subsequently taught *nygromancie* by Oriande (1164–1303) and how his extraordinary progress in his magic studies outdoes Baldaris (1304–1455, 1638–1789), even gaining him a doctorate in Paris as a master of magic (2108–3037).

57 *Maugis d'Aigremont. Chanson de geste*. Édition critique avec introduction, notes et glossaire, ed. Philippe Vernay. Romanica Helvetica, 93 (Bern: Francke, 1980).

Two varieties of magical practitioners seem to have been at home at medieval courts: astrologers or diviners (or both) who acted as advisors and magical entertainers, masters of performative arts. But if we look at medieval courtly literature (which in a way reflected reality when it comes to preferences and values), we actually find the two branches intertwined. Sinister magicians manipulated their subjects, and one of the standard feats of heroic knights was to defeat such magicians and to expose their diabolical tricks.⁵⁸ Beneficial magicians aided the protagonist, and in these cases the more entertaining and functional side of magical skills were emphasized: they might entertain the hero, or help deceive enemies with illusions, or even construct war machines.

IV. Natural Magic and the Art of Juggling: Experiments and their Presentation as an Entertaining and Thrilling Magic Show

Juggling and trickery were not the first thoughts that came to mind when medieval minds defined magic, nor did they think of stage performers. Even so, the performance seems to have gained increasing importance in medieval magic. And performance also means interaction between an audience and the performer in which the spectators function as a touchstone for the effect and success of his experiments or tricks. Kieckhefer ascertains that this illusory or trickery branch of magic “... became linked in complex ways with other, more sophisticated or more sinister forms of magic ...”⁵⁹

⁵⁸ The magician Aroés in the French romance *Perceforest* deludes his subjects with visions of heaven and hell, in order to be worshiped as God himself. He claims to heal the sick but actually throws hopeless cases into the sea. The knight Gadifer unveils his tricks with the help of a magic ring and the visions turn out to be skillfully arranged bottled liquids. Optical tricks by deception of the senses are mentioned in the treatise *secretum philosophorum*. See Robert Goulding, “Deceiving the Senses in the Thirteenth Century: Trickery and Illusion in the *Secretum philosophorum*,” *Magic and the Classical Tradition*, ed. Charles Burnett and W. F. Ryan (London: Warburg Institute, 2006), 135–63; here 154–55. On the magician Aroés, see Denyse Delcourt, “The Laboratory of Fiction: Magic and Image in the *Roman de Perceforest*,” *Medievalia et Humanistica*, NS, 21 (1994): 17–32; Michelle Szkilnik, “Aroés l’illusioniste (*Perceforest*, 3e partie),” *Romania* 113 (1992–1995): 441–65; Jane H. M. Taylor, “Faith and Austerity: The Ecclesiology of the *Roman de Perceforest*,” *The Changing Face of Arthurian Romance: Essays on Arthurian Prose Romances in Memory of Cedric E. Pickford*, ed. Alison Adams. *Arthurian Studies*, 16 (Cambridge: Brewer, 1986), 47–65.

⁵⁹ Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (see note 41), 93.

A range of beliefs and practices relate not to supposed demonic power but to the ability of human beings to improve their condition and create beneficial items through the manipulation of natural forces. This natural magic was distinguished by its practitioners both from artificial magic that made use of machines and technological processes and from demonic magic which functioned by superseding natural laws through demonic invention. The natural magician sought to explore the workings of nature for speculative or utilitarian purposes through a pseudo-scientific program of experimental research.

Although natural magicians emphasized the distinction of their arts from the diabolical crafts of conjurers, witches, and diviners, the distinction was not so clear to their contemporaries. While people marvelled at the arcane feats of a Giambattista Della Porta (1535–1615),⁶⁰ for example, he was also denounced several times to the Inquisition. Benito Pereira (1535–1610), in his *Adversus Fallaces et Superstitiosas Artes* of 1591, defined *magia naturalis* as the fundamental knowledge of natural causes, in opposition to demonical or unnatural magic.

The first is natural magic in which wonders are created by the individual artifice of certain people who make use of things which are natural. ... Natural Magic is divided into “optical” and “medical.” The former deceives the gaze of the spectators by incredible dexterity of the hands, fingers and other parts of the body. The latter uses salves, fumigations, bindings and potions, and so upsets the inner and outer senses that they experience a reality quite different from what their senses would normally tell them. The magic also uses lumens, rings, images and mirrors set up and moved from one place to another.⁶¹

Among the many elements described here, one very important point stands out: while practitioners of natural magic might distinguish it from demonic illusion, it too involved deceiving the human senses. Whereas the devil crafted sensual delusions for witches, jugglers and magicians used sensory illusions to perform many magical tricks which depended on known failings of the human senses. They also played on standard human assumptions. One of the simplest tricks involved the clever use of mirrors against bland or repetitive backgrounds. Audiences see what they assume is background but what is actually a mirror image. Commonly, such devices are used from a stage to make the audience think

⁶⁰ Giambattista Della Porta, *Natural Magick* (London: Printed for Thomas Young and Samuel Speed, 1658; rpt. New York: Basic Books [facsimile], 1957).

⁶¹ Benito Pereira, “Adversus Fallaces, et Superstitiosas Artes 1.9,” trans. In *The Occult in Early Modern Europe: A Documentary History*, ed. P. G. Maxwell-Stuart, chap. III Different Types of Magic (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 117. See the discussion in Clark, *Vanities of the Eye* (see note 32), 80–81.

there is empty space under a table or platform, or that there is not enough room for a body when there is actually just enough to make the illusion work.

Simpler tricks predicated on the skilled deceiving of the senses were used in the art of legerdemaine of the thimblorig player. The first to mention it in ancient Greece was Alciphron (between 170 and 350 C.E.), who described farmers visiting Athens to attend a magic show:

Most of the shows I don't recall, for I'm a poor hand at remembering and telling such things. But I can tell you that one thing I saw made me almost speechless with astonishment. A man came forward and setting down a three-legged table, placed three little cups on it. Then under these cups hid some little round white pebbles such as we find on the banks of a rapid streams. At one moment he would hide them one under each cup. Then he would make them entirely disappear from under the cups and exhibit them between his lips. Then he would swallow them and drawing forward the spectators who stood near him would take one pebble from a man's nose, another from a man's ear and the third from a man's head. After picking them up he would make them disappear from sight again. ...

I hope no creature like him ever gets onto my farm though. No one would ever catch him. He would steal everything in the house and make off with all the goods.⁶²

We know not only the cup and balls game but also the trick often performed by magicians in which they “find” a coin or something in the bystanders’ ears or nose.⁶³ In the cup and ball game as we know it today there never are any balls under the cups; whenever the audience points at a cup, the balls are placed under another one by the skilled sleight-of-hand performers. This trick can be traced back further to Egyptian and Roman times. The professional arts of the *acetabula et catcula* was often performed for the crowds in the times of the Roman author Seneca (1–65 C.E.), who wrote in his epistles to Proconsul Lucullus.⁶⁴

⁶² Alciphron, *The Letters* 2, 17. trans. Alan R. Benner and Francis Fobes. Loeb Classical Library, 383. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 110–12.

⁶³ Hieronymus Bosch's painting “Conjuror” (here in a copy from ca. 1502, Fig. 1) shows the fascinated audience, which is so stunned that one distracted spectator has his purse pilfered. This seems realistic to this day, as the cup and ball artists always work in teams and are rarely honorable characters.

⁶⁴ Seneca, Lucius. *Epistles* 1–65, trans. Richard M. Gummere. Loeb Classical Library, 75 (Cambridge, MA: The Loeb Classical Library, 1917), 45, 290.



Fig. 1: “The Conjurer” (The Prestidigitator); copy after Hieronymus Bosch, Netherlandish, ca. 1450–1516

Sic ista sine noxa decipiunt quomodo praestigiatorum acetabula et calculi, in quibus me fallacia ipsa delectat. Effice ut quomodo fiat intellegam: perdidit lusum.⁶⁵

[Such quibbles are just as harmlessly deceptive as the juggler’s cup and dice, in which it is the very trickery that pleases me. But show me how the trick is done, and I have lost my interest therein.]

When Walther von der Vogelweide (ca. 1170–ca. 1230) criticizes politicians of his time, he logically chooses the comparison with the tricks of the cup and ball jugglers⁶⁶:

Genuoge hêrren sint gelich den gougelâeren,
die behendekliche kunnen triegen unde vâeren.

⁶⁵ Christopher, Milbourne, *The Illustrated History of Magic* (New York: Avalon Publishing Group, 2006).

⁶⁶ For the history of the juggler, see Raimund Herder, *Historisches Denken und Phänomenologie* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1994), 118–31.

Dr sprichet: “sich her, was ist under disem huote?
 Nû zucke in ûf!,” dâ stêt ein wilder valke in sînem muote.
 “Zucke ûf den huot!” sô stet ein stolzer pfâwe dar under.
 “nû zucke in ûf!,” dâ stet ein merwunder.
 Swie dicke daz geschiht, sô ist ez jungest niht wan ein krâ.⁶⁷

[So many lords are like those tricky quick-change artists.
 Who can deceive so nimbly, and lure you to their slick surprises.
 One says, “Go take a look, What’s underneath that hood there?
 Just lift it up!” A wild falcon stands in full-fledged attitude there. “Lift up that hat!” – it’s a
 peacock proud of every feature.
 “Now lift it up!” – there stands a strange sea-creature.
 However many times that plays, in the end there is nothing but a crow.⁶⁸]

The interpretation of this political statement and critique of aristocracy portrays a well-known scene at a medieval village fair in which the cup and ball trick is performed. While many of the medieval participants of this show knew that they were being deceived, they nevertheless seemed to enjoy the demonstration. In Hieronymus Bosch’s painting, “The Conjurer” (ca. 1502, Fig. 1) the scene with the audience is quite impressive. An anonymous copy after Bosch’s famous subject dates from the early sixteenth century (ca. 1502).

Peter Burke explains that in early modern times the jugglers were successors of the medieval minstrels commonly found in England and also on the continent. Many of the names overlapped because the functions overlapped; the professional entertainers certainly put on a variety show.⁶⁹ The incredible artistry of the jugglers drew large crowds and hence the councilmen demanded their share of the itinerant show-magicians.⁷⁰ Although people seemed to be entertained well, the reputation of the jugglers remained dubious: they were called shady

⁶⁷ Walther von der Vogelweide, *Leich, Lieder, Sangsprüche*, ed. Christoph Cormeau (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), L. 37, 34.

⁶⁸ Walther von der Vogelweide, *The Single-Stanza Lyrics*, ed. and trans. Frederick Goldin (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 117.

⁶⁹ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 136–37. The folklorist and magician Kurt Volkmann published an anthology about the cup and ball game: *Das Becherspiel: Darstellungen des Zaubers in der bildenden Kunst: Das 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* (Düsseldorf: Magischer Zirkel Deutschlands, 1954), to Bosch, see 18–22; he also quotes a woodprint of an unknown master of the fifteenth century of an astrological scene: Effects of the planets, Planet’s children, Luna. In the lower right corner a cup and ball game is depicted (see Fig. 2).

⁷⁰ Augustin Lerchheimer, *Christlich bedencken und erinnerung von Zauberey, Woher, was, und wievielfeltig sie sey, wem sie schade könne oder nicht. / Nur an vernünftige, redliche leute gestellt durch Augustin Lerchheimer von Steinfeldten* [i.e., Hermann Witekind] (Speier: Lerchheimer, 1585), 281–82

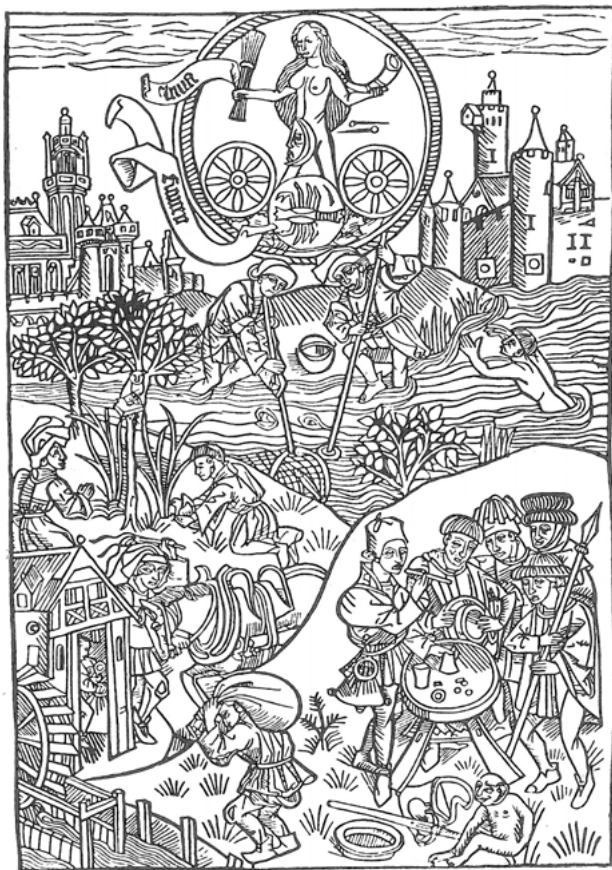


Fig. 2: Woodcut ca. 1470 by an unknown master. Planet's children, Luna

and a bad bunch because their *gaukelspil* was looked upon as deception and insidiousness. In the late sixteenth century they were still regarded with suspicion: “Solche Possen weren zu leiden, giengen wol hin, wanns dabey bliebe und sie nicht übernatürliche unmenschliche spectacul erzeugten mit des tueffels beystand” (Such entertainment would not be harmful if it would only remain in this harmless state. But the supernatural and nonhuman spectacle clearly show the devil's aid).⁷¹

⁷¹ Lerchheimer, *Christlich bedencken* (see note 70).

What were the tricks that fascinated the crowds beside the cup and ball game? One of the most mysterious was the so-called Indian rope trick. Generally speaking, the principle behind the famous and notorious Indian rope trick is similar to the cups and balls. It is about appearance and disappearance. An account by Ibn Battuta describes the entertainment at the place of the Amir Kurtai in China around 1348. His description narrates the event that later became famous as the Indian rope trick. It can be considered the ultimate disappearing act.

That same night a juggler, who was one of the Kán's slaves, made his appearance, and the Amir said to him, 'Come and show us some of your marvels'. Upon this he took a wooden ball, with several holes in it through which long thongs were passed, and slung it into the air. It went so high that we lost sight of it altogether. There now remained only a little of the end of a thong in the conjuror's hand, and he desired one of the boys who assisted him to lay hold of it and mount. He did so, climbing by the thong, and we lost sight of him also! The conjuror then called to him three times, but getting no answer he snatched up a knife, as if in a great rage, laid hold of the thong, and disappeared also! Bye and bye he threw down one of the boy's hands, then a foot, then the other hand and the other foot, then the trunk, and last of all the head! Then he came down himself, all puffing and panting, and with his clothes all bloody, kissed the ground before the Amir. And said something to him in Chinese. The Amir gave some order in reply, and our friend then took the lad's limbs, laid them together in their places, and gave a kick, when, presto! There was the boy, who got up and stood before us! All this astonished me beyond measure.⁷²

If we believe Johann Weyer's account in his *De Praestigiis daemonum* from 1566, this trick was first publicly performed in Magdeburg and then spread all over Germany from there.

Zu Magdeburg ist auff ein zeit ein seltsamer zauberer gewesen / welcher in gegenwertigkeit einer grossen menge zusehern / von denen er ein groß gelt auffgehebt / ein wunder kleins Rößlein das im ring vumher tanzet / gezeigt / vnd wenn sich denn das Spiel zem ende nähert / beklagt sich der Possenreisser / wie er bey der vndanckbarn welt so gar nicht nutztes schaffen möchte / dieweil menniglichen so karg / dz er sich betlens kaum erwehren möchte. Deßhalben so wolte er recht von inen vurlaub nehmen/ vnd den allernechsten gen Himmel / ob vielleicht sein sach daselbst besser würde / fahren. Unnd als er diese wort gesprochen / warff er ein Seil in die höhe /welchem das Rößlein (wie es sich dann liesse ansehen) one allen verzug stracks nachfure / der Zauberer erwischte es bey dem wadel / sein Frauw ihne bey den füßen / die Magd die Fraw bey den Kleidern / also daß sie alle / als ob sie aneind' weren geschmidet gewest / nach einander ob sich dahin

⁷² Henry Yule, ed., *Cathay and the Way Thither: Being a Collection of Medieval Notice of China*, 2 vols. Hakluyt Society, First Series (London: Hakluyt Society, 1866) II, 500–01; *The Travels of Ibn Battuta AD 1325–1354*, ed. and trans. C. Defrémey, B. R. Sanguinetti, H. A. R. Gibb, and C. F. Beckingham, 5 vols. Hakluyt Society, Second Series (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1958–1994), IV (1962), 903–04.

fuhren. Als nun das Volck da stund / dz maul offen hatt / vnd ob dieser sach / wiewol zugedencken / erstaunet war / kam on alle gefehr ein burger daher / welchen / als er fragt wz sie da machten / geantwortet ward / der gauckler were mit seim rößlein in die lufft gefahren. Darauff er sie berichtet / er habe in eben zu gegen seiner Herberg gesehen daher gehen. Als sie nun vermerckten dz er inen ein bossen gemacht hat / sind sie recht auch den nechsten heim gezogen.⁷³

[For a fixed fee, a magician of Magdeburg displayed in a crowded theatre a little horse leaping though a hoop. At the end of the act, after complaining the he had collected little money among mortals, the magician said that he wished to mount up to heaven. Thereupon, he threw a rope into the air, and the little horse followed it upward, and the illusionist also ascended, and his wife followed, holding on to her husband, and likewise their maid, so it seemed they were all flying up into the air, linked together, as it were a continuous line of ascent. While the crowds were gazing at these things in amazement, one of their fellow citizens happened to come in and ask what was going on there. They replied that the charlatan had ascended into the air with his little horse; but the newcomers stoutly maintained that they had just seen him in the street heading towards the inn. And so, when the spectators realized that they had been deceived, they went away.]

The scholar Bruno Roy interprets literary representations of such magicians as exaggerations of actual illusionists operating in this period.⁷⁴ Indeed, a number of late medieval treatises titled *experimenta* contain tricks clearly designed as entertainment. Reginald Scot, in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft* of 1574,⁷⁵ calls juggling a deceitful art, and he provides the most complete survey of contemporary techniques for visual deception.⁷⁶ A notable description is what was known as the

73 Johann Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum. Von Teuffelsgespenst Zaubern vnd Gifftbereytern/ Schwarzkünstlern/Hexen vnd Unholden / darzu irer Straff / auch von den Bezauberten / vnd wie ihnen zuhelffen sey / Ordentlich vnd eigentlich mit sonderm fleiß in VI Bücher getheilet: Darinnen gründlich vnd eigentlich dargethan / was von solchen jeder zeit disputiert / vnd gehalten worden*, trans. Johanne Fuglino (Frankfurt a. M.: Nikolaus Basseus, 1586, Rpt. Darmstadt: Blaschke, 1969), 105; Johann Weyer, *On Witchcraft*. An abridged translation. ed. Benjamin G. Kohl and H. C. Erik Midelfort; trans. John Shea (Asheville, NC: Pegasus Press, 1998), ch. II, 158. For more medieval and later tricks, cf. Robert Goulding, "Deceiving the Senses in the Thirteenth Century: Trickery and Illusion in the 'Secretum philosophorum,'" *Magic and the Classical Tradition*, ed. Charles Burnett and W. F. Ryan (London: Warburg Institute, 2006), 135–62; and Mark Clarke, "Writing Recipes for Non-Specialists c.1300: The Anglo-Latin *Secretum philosophorum*," *Glasgow MS Hunterian 110*," *Sources and Serendipity: Testimonies of Artists' Practice*, ed. Erma Hermens and Joyce Townsend (London: Archetype Publications, 2009), 50–64.

74 Bruno Roy, "The Household Encyclopedia as Magic Kit: Medieval Popular Interest," *Popular Culture of the Middle Ages*, ed. Josie P. Campbell (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Press, 1986), 29–39.

75 Reginald Scott, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, ed. John Rodker (1930; New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1972), ch. XXII–XXIII, 181–82.

76 Reginald Scott, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (see note 74), 182.

John the Baptist trick, which Scot claims to have seen himself. In this trick, the magician decapitates himself and puts his own head on a plate. It certainly reminds us of the beheading game in the English alliterative romance *Sir Gawein and the Green Knight* (late fourteenth century)⁷⁷ and the magician Gansguoter in Heinrich von dem Türlin's *Crône* (late thirteenth century).⁷⁸ Descriptions of other such tricks abounded. Thomas Ross's popular handbook *Natural and Artificial Conclusions* (1567) even had instructions for how to walk on water:

For to do this, take two little timbrels and bind them under the soles of the feet, and at stave's end fasten another, and with these you may safely walk on the water unto the wonder of all such as shall see the same: if so be you often exercise the same with a certain boldness and lightness of the body.⁷⁹

But it was not only at village fairs that jugglers performed. In the romances of Charlemagne (from 1300 onwards), entertainment at a court feast is vividly depicted with the performances of itinerant entertainers such as storytellers and poets, heralds, musicians playing the fiddle, horn, flute – made of wood or bone – bagpipes, psalterion, or zither – which they learned in Paris; fools, magicians, wrestlers, jugglers with hoops and sticks and sticks and plates, those who jump, those who ride on apes, fire-eaters, those who dance with dogs, those who chew stones, and imitators of animals' voices arrive, as do priests, burghers and knights.⁸⁰

What is essential for the jugglers but is not as strongly emphasized in the other examples is the importance of an audience; without spectators, there would be no show and without a show there would be no pleasure for the people and no proof that the trick worked.

In the biblical and other examples, the focus lay on a sorcerers' competition and the audiences were merely bystanders applauding the winner who had successfully proved that their religion was superior to the other. In the case of jug-

⁷⁷ *Sir Gawein and the Green Knight*, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt. 8th ed. Vol. B (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 2006), 19–21 and 160–61.

⁷⁸ Heinrich von dem Türlin, *Diu Crône*, ed. Gudrun Felder. De-Gruyter-Texte. (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012); Reginald Scott, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (see note 74), 321–52.

⁷⁹ Gãmini Salgãdo, *The Elizabethan Underworld* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1992), 75.

⁸⁰ *Karlmeinet*, vol. 2, ed. Adelbert von Keller. Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins Stuttgart, 45 (1858; Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1971), 5128–200; Ulrich von dem Türlin enumerates amusements at court: itinerant entertainers, jugglers, acrobats (walking on balls, jumping), musicians, and a children's choir. Ulrich von dem Türlin, *Arabel*, ed. Werner Schröder (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Hirzel, 1999), 44–45.

gling, nothing is going to be proved other than that the human eyes and human perception can be misled and are generally slower than skilful human hands. Butterworth's history of the early English stage concentrates on this point: "In tricks like Cups and Balls where appearances and disappearances are in a constant state of flux the gibecière is an essential item to the juggler who stands in front of his audience."⁸¹

Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576) initiated a discussion about ways of creating wonders with the example of a juggler at Emperor Charles V's (1500–1558) court.⁸² A Spaniard named Damautum was a very skilled juggler proficient at deceiving spectators. Cardano describes in detail techniques of fire-eating and rope-walking and the phenomenon, normally associated with demonic possession, of vomiting nails or glass, as well as tricks for producing visions and illusions.

The Jacobean writer Samuel Rid in his *Art of Juggling or Legerdemaine* (1612) recounts street illusionists of his times, identifying them as Gypsies.⁸³ In his eyes, the boundaries between confidence tricksters and performing jugglers eventually became blurred. Yet, as Rid's treatise shows, by the end of the seventeenth century a distinct and recognizable performance art intended as entertainment was emerging.⁸⁴ In the Age of Enlightenment, travelling folk and cunning men inherited some of the role of earlier magicians and natural scientists. They "provided something of the larger-than-life theatricality which the earlier church ritual contained."⁸⁵ In fact, they created a mysterious atmosphere by receiving their clientele in darkened rooms ornate with special furnishings and dressed in mysterious attire, thus forming a stereotype well known to this day. Even if it would be wrong to perceive early modern natural scientists as forerunners of the nineteenth-century stage magicians, the complicated devices that created stage illusions surely can be compared with a technological tradition extending back through the early modern and medieval periods, and even to ancient automatons constructed for entertainment.

⁸¹ Philipp Butterworth, *Magic on the Early English Stage* (see note 30), 90.

⁸² Girolamo Cardano, *De Subtilitate, Opera omnia*, 10 vols. (Lyons: ed. Charles Soni, 1663), iii, 635–54, quoted after Clark, *Vanities of the Eye* (see note 12), 81sq.

⁸³ Samuel Rid, *Art of Juggling and Legerdemaine* (London: Printed by George Eld, 1612; rpt. New York: John McARDle, 1952), 4 sq.; Bruno Roy, "The Household Encyclopedia as Magic Kit: Medieval Popular Interest," *Popular Culture of the Middle Ages*, ed. Josie P. Campbell (Bowling Green, OH: Ohio University Popular Press, 1986), 29–39.

⁸⁴ Michael Mangan, "'... and so shall you seem to have cut your nose in sunder': Illusions of Power on the Elizabethan Stage and in the Elizabethan Market-Place," *Performance Research* 1 (1996): 65–68.

⁸⁵ Salgãdo, *Elizabethan Underworld* (see note 79), 76.

Conclusion

We have explored the earliest meaning of prestige, as well as its development through the ages and its tendency to be a staged performance of entertaining character. In antiquity, much emphasis fell on technology, the machinery that caused illusory effects. Thus, magicians performed in public places – at dinner parties and so forth – and hence an audience was an essential feature of such magic. In Jewish and early Christian sources, public competitions were staged (or described) between magicians and prophets or saints, intended to prove that the winner was a miracle worker supported by God, whereas the defeated magician's pagan gods had lesser power. In the Christian era, the devil and demons came to be considered powerful agents and the cause of much illusion. Although there were still court magicians who worked marvels by technological means, authorities became convinced that such knowledge was given to them by a diabolical agent. At the beginning of the early modern period, with the development of natural sciences and growing knowledge of the natural causes of many marvellous effects, the belief in diabolical wonderworkers seems to have faded away. At European courts, mechanical devices were no longer in the hands of sinister magicians who had made diabolical pacts but in those of engineers displaying the glory of sovereigns and supplied entertainment for the court.

The small-time performers of illusions and sleight of hand tricks gathered their audience not only at the courts but at markets and public fairs, and the jugglers' method of performance and variety of entertaining tricks produced a new branch of introductory literature from early modern times onwards.

Carlee Arnett

***Hestaping* (Horse Meeting/s) in Medieval Icelandic Culture**

In medieval Iceland, horse meetings were a place for people to gather and socialize while showing horsemanship skills and choosing the most compatible horses for their own herd. The heroic and family sagas as well as legal documents illustrate how horse meetings were organized and how participants and spectators were expected to behave. In medieval Europe at large, horses are used for travel, farming, combat/jousting, hunting, and riding for pleasure. By and large, horses are not used for the sole purpose of entertainment. Jousting is a form of leisure for the spectators, but the horsemen are actually keeping their fighting skills sharp and participating in a training exercise. Riding for pleasure is also a way to keep horse and rider fit as well as to keep the horse acclimated to a wider environment away from its home. Training and keeping a horse and rider fit can be fun, but fun is a by-product of the process and not necessarily the goal. In the Middle Ages, horses are also used in the hunt and in falconry, but the hunt is the purpose of the activity and the horse is a means to the end. As with all of the aforementioned horse activities in medieval Europe, horse meetings in medieval Iceland combined entertainment with cultivating necessary horsemanship skills.

Since horses are viewed as utilitarian in medieval Iceland, they are classified by their use or place of origin and not by breed, as is common today. In Iceland, between the ninth and thirteenth centuries horses were used for transportation, fighting, worship, food, and as pack animals. The uses for horses were probably similar in continental Europe for Norse cultures that settled there. However, how horses were used in other cultures in continental Europe is beyond the scope of this paper. In contrast, today, in most of Europe's horses are used for sport or pulling a carriage. In modern Iceland specifically, some horses are still working animals and they are used to herd other horses. In medieval Iceland, horses were also the focal point of regional and island wide gatherings.

Following Gogosz, this paper investigates the role of horse meetings in Icelandic culture.¹ According to him, there are various terms to refer to horse meet-

1 Remigiusz Gogosz, "Horse-Fights: The Brutal Entertainment of the Icelanders in the Middle

ings, such as *hestaþing* (a meeting of horses), the most common, *hestaat* (horse fight), and *hestavíg* (horse fight). Other words like *víghest* (fighting horse), *hesta-keyrsla* (prod a horse), *hestastafr* (horse staff), and *etja saman*, *bíta* (fight together, bite) show that part of a horse meeting was to have horses fight. Gogosz cites twenty references to horse meetings in either the sagas or the law books with the first reference occurring in the ninth century and the last in the sixteenth century.² From these written records, we can build a more complete picture of this form of entertainment than has been provided to date.

In order to contextualize horse meetings and horse fighting in Icelandic society, it is important to consider what we already know from textual evidence and what we can consider as further implications with respect to pleasure and leisure in the Nordic world. The incorrect idea that horse fighting in medieval Iceland was two stallions fighting to the death seems to have been started by Guðmundsson who makes the claim, but does not provide any evidence from the sagas or historical sources.³ Gogosz and Solheim have provided descriptions of horse fighting from Icelandic sources and speculated about the purpose.⁴ Mostly, they have determined what horse fighting is not; for example, it is not a pagan ritual, a component of fertility cults, a way to bleed horses after slaughter, or a pre-burial ritual.

Icelandic horses populate sagas and are a common part of archaeological finds and clearly were part of medieval Icelandic culture. Horses arrived in Iceland between 860 and 935 C.E. with the Norse settlers. Other settlers followed from Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the islands west of Scotland. Swedish traders in Russia brought Mongolian horses back to the Norse world and those horses were brought to Iceland as well.⁵ In 982 C.E., the Althing passed laws to prohibit the introduction of new bloodlines into the native stock, which ended cross-breeding with horses from outside Iceland. This was presumably done to preserve the desirable qualities of the native stock. The closure of the island to any new bloodlines means that the native stock would need to be broadly

Ages,” *Średniowiecze Polski i Powszechne* 5.9 (2014): 17–32; here 20 (<https://www.academia.edu>, last accessed on August 24, 2018).

² Gogosz, “Horse-Fights: The Brutal Entertainment” (see note 1), 21.

³ Valtýr Guðmundsson, “Hestaþing formanna,” *Eimreiðin* 9 (1903): 33–44; here 35 (as cited in Gogosz, “Horse-Fights: The Brutal Entertainment” [see note 1], here 23).

⁴ Gogosz, “Horse-Fights: The Brutal Entertainment” (see note 1); Svale Solheim, *Horse-Fight and Horse Race in Norse Tradition*. *Studia Norvegica*, 8 (Oslo: H. Aschehoug, 1956).

⁵ Pamela Nolf, “Detecting Icelandic Horse Origins,” *Icelandic Horse Quarterly* 4 (2012): 18–23; here 20; also available online at: <https://www.icelandics.org/quarterly/equarterly.php>, last accessed on Aug. 26, 2016.

bred to prevent hereditary diseases and congenital defects. The need to breed to the most genetically different horse available would be a great incentive to find mates from across the island. During the Icelandic Middle Ages (874–1300 C.E), many horses died of exposure and starvation. Nonetheless, selective breeding took place with the goals of improving confirmation and conforming to special rules of color.⁶ Desirable colors most likely varied over time, but the most prevalent colors were probably black, bay, chestnut, gray, white, palomino, pinto, and roan. Certain colors (and eye color) were likely associated with the temperament of the horse in the Middle Ages, and this view can be heard about horses today. Since the associations between color and temperament have varied over time and by place in just the last century, common sense would suggest that color and temperament are not correlated and that this is a socially constructed set of values.

As noted above, Icelandic horses come in a wide variety of colors and stand about 13–15.2 hands high (a hand is four inches). In the Anglo-American world, a pony is anything under 14.2 hands at the withers. Iceland does not follow this convention, so there are no ponies, only horses. Icelandic horses weigh between 730 and 840 pounds and, like all horses, can carry a third of their body weight comfortably. That means that a horse can pack easily 200 pounds or carry a man, tack (saddle and bridle), and his gear up to the same amount.

Now that a description of the Icelandic horse has been provided, we can return to a discussion of horse meetings and their role in Icelandic society. According to Gogosz, *hestavíg* (horse fighting) was a form of entertainment in medieval Iceland, and it occurred as part of a larger gathering called a *hestaping* (horse gathering), which in turn could be part of an assembly as described in *Reykjadal Saga*.⁷ Presumably, all manner of horse-related activities took place at a horse gathering such as buying and selling, racing and displaying horses. Solheim classifies horse fights with other sports and games such as horse races, foot races, *glíma* (a martial art), and *knattleikr* (a ball game for which the exact rules are unknown).⁸ In chapter 23 of the *Saga of Bjorn, Champion of the Hitardal People*, horse fighting occurs along with other entertainments and recitations.⁹

⁶ United States Icelandic Horse Congress, <https://www.icelandics.org/colors>, last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018.

⁷ Gogosz, “Horse-Fights: The Brutal Entertainment” (see note 1); *Reykjadal Saga*, in *The Complete Sagas of the Icelanders. Including 49 Tales*, 4, ed. Viðar Hreinsson (Reykjavik: Leifur Eiríksson Publishing, 1997), 257–302; here 271.

⁸ Solheim, *Horse-Fight and Horse Race in Norse Tradition* (see note 4).

⁹ *The Saga of Bjorn, Champion of the Hitardal People*, in *The Complete Sagas of the Icelanders. Including 49 Tales*, 1 (see note 7), 255–304; here 286.

In *The Saga of the People of Laxardal*, chapter 60, a mother rebukes her sons for not avenging the death of their father because their thoughts are on horse fights and sports. For some, this form of entertainment is a way to jockey for position in the social hierarchy and for others it is a costly, frivolous waste of time.¹⁰

In medieval Iceland, horses are both a symbol of masculine honor and an efficient means of transportation.¹¹ Although both men and women rode horses, horse riding is associated with male honor. Clover describes Icelandic society as a one-sex system with men as superior and women as inferior men. She suggests it might be more accurate to portray society as one in which both men and women can achieve masculine honor (or not).¹² Horses are associated with honor, loyalty, bravery, wealth, and strength, i.e., traditional Icelandic values, and those who ride horses are identified with these traits. The horse is a reflection of the man, so it is quite an insult in *Víga-Glúms Saga*, chapter 13, when Kálf says to Glúm, “Því munuð þér eigi vilja að engi hugur mun í vera. Kann vera að sanni hið fornkeðna, að fé sé drottni líkt”¹³ (“the reason you don’t want to put your horse to a fight must be that there’s no spirit in him; perhaps that old proverb is true, that the livestock’s like its master”).¹⁴

There is another example of a man’s worth being exemplified by the quality of his horse in chapter 59 of *Brennu-Njáls Saga*.¹⁵ In the description of the horse fight, Gunnar plans to turn the fight to his advantage by pushing the rearing horses so that they fall on his opponent. Gunnar’s opponent had also planned to harm Gunnar by doing the same. Gunnar pushes the horses knowing that rearing horses will fall. His opponent is knocked down by the horse, becomes angry and stabs out the eye of Gunnar’s horse. Although a horse with one eye is just as useful as a horse with two, Gunnar has a kinsman kill the horse because he does not want to be associated with a maimed animal.

¹⁰ *The Saga of the People of Laxardal*, in *The Complete Sagas of the Icelanders. Including 49 Tales*, 5 (see note 7), 1–121; here 93

¹¹ Eric Christiansen, *The Norsemen in the Viking Age* (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006).

¹² Carol J. Clover, “Regardless of Sex: Men, Women, and Power in Early Northern Europe,” *Representations* 44 (1993): 1–28.

¹³ *Víga-Glúms Saga*. Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 24, 2018).

¹⁴ *Víga-Glúms Saga*, trans. into English by Edmund Head (1866), Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 24, 2018).

¹⁵ *Brennu-Njáls Saga*, trans. into English by George W. DaSent (1861), Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018).

Solheim and Gogosz rely on the wealth of information about horse gatherings and specifically horse fighting that is provided in the sagas.¹⁶ The sagas explain when, where, and how horse meetings were to take place. In *Viga-Glúms Saga*, chapter 18, there is a description of a horse meeting and horse fight that reveals how this type of event was managed. From this description, we know when and where horse meetings and fights took place and how they were judged. The horse fight under consideration in Chapter 18 is introduced to the reader with the following: “Annar sumar var stofnat hestaping, þat er ollum hestum skal etja, þeim er til váru á heraðinu, ok skyldu ðeir í mót ór inum efra hrepp ok inum neðra” (“The next summer there was a meeting appointed for a horse fight, in which all the horses in the district were to be fought; those from the upper against those from the lower rape”).¹⁷ The description indicates that horse meetings could take place in the summer and that they could be regional events, first in the opening sentence and secondly when an explanation of the rules tells the participants that each region should provide a man to judge the horse fights. Consider, for example, “og skyldu sinn mann hvorir til taka og kveða að hvorir betur hefðu og skulu þeirra atkvæði standa er til voru kosnir” (“and either party were to select their man as umpire to decide which had the best of it. The judgment of the men thus chosen was to be abided by”).¹⁸ So now we know that each region or side provided a judge and the judge’s decisions were to be followed. The statement that the judgment of the men was to be accepted suggests that arguments did occur about which horse was best and that the authority of the judges was not always respected. Another detail about the organization is provided in chapter 59 in *Brennu-Njáls Saga* and chapter 29 in *Grettis Saga* in which there is a discussion of who should handle the horse before, during, and after the fight.¹⁹ A “second” can be appointed to handle the horse during the horse fight so that the owner can transact business without having to be engaged with the horse. A handler that is not the owner will also show

¹⁶ Solheim, *Horse-Fight and Horse Race in Norse Tradition* (see note 4); Gogosz, “Horse-Fights: The Brutal Entertainment...,” (see note 1).

¹⁷ *Viga-Glúms Saga*. Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 24, 2018); *Viga-Glúms Saga*, trans. into English by Edmund Head (1866), Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 24, 2018).

¹⁸ *Viga-Glúms Saga*. Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 24, 2018); *Viga-Glúms Saga*, trans. into English by Edmund Head (1866), Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 24, 2018).

¹⁹ *Brennu-Njáls Saga*, trans. into English by George W. DaSent (1861), Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018); *Grettir’s Saga*, trans. into English by William and Eiríkr Magnússon (1861). Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018).

how the horse is with other people and if the horse can be handled by someone besides the owner.

The description in chapter 18 of *Viga-Glúms Saga* further indicates that a region wins at a horse gathering when their horses beat the horses from other regions in a horse fight. Therefore, over the course of the horse meeting, various horses fight and the victor is the region that has the most horses win fights. Consider the following description:

Ofan úr hrepp var Bárður til kosinn en úr neðra hrepp Vigfús Glúmsson. Var þar fjöldi hesta og góð skemmtan og mjög jafnvígi og voru mörg hestavíg senn um daginn. En svo lauk að jafnmargir höfðu vel bitist og jafnmargir runnið og urðu þeir á það sáttir að jafnvígi væri.²⁰

[There were many horses, and the sport was good, but the fight was pretty equal, and many matches came off, with the result however that the number of those which fought well, and those which had run away was the same, so they agreed that it was an equal match²¹]

From the passage above, it is clear that a variety of horses are brought to the horse meeting and there are many horse fights. The loser of the fight is the horse that shows deference by moving away, which stands in direct contrast to the idea that horses fight to the death. Furthermore, there is no detailed account of the interactions of the horses presumably because the people know what two horses squabbling entails and they are familiar with natural horse behavior.

The events of horse gathering and horse fighting came with the earliest settlers from Norway to Iceland, and it was Norwegian laws that provide evidence of the earliest practices.²² In addition to the established norms of horse fighting, there are two laws that govern the event. According to the *Jónsbók* from 1281, there are two rules for horse fighting. First, no one can initiate a horse fight without the owner's permission. Given the high value of a horse, particularly a stallion who can be bred more times than a mare, it would be best to be clear about who bears the cost if there is an injury that lessens the value of the horse. The second rule is that the instigator of the fight is responsible for any damages.²³ This suggests that fighting to the death or even sustaining an injury is not a desirable outcome because one party is financially liable for the damage. Since

²⁰ *Viga-Glúms Saga*. Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018).

²¹ *Viga-Glúms Saga*, trans. into English by Edmund Head (1866), Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018).

²² Solheim, *Horse-Fight and Horse Race in Norse Tradition* (see note 4); Gogosz, "Horse-Fights: The Brutal Entertainment..." (see note 1).

²³ *Jónsbók: The Laws of Later Iceland*. The Icelandic Text According to MS AM 351 fol. Skálholtsbók eldri, with an English translation, introduction and notes by Jana K. Schulman (Saarbrücken: AQ-Verlag, 2010), 228.

horses are valuable, the monetary compensation for death or injury could be substantial.

A passage from Grágás, a pre-1281 collection of Icelandic/Norwegian law, explains the system for evaluating a horse's worth. The passage states that "stóð-hestur, og sé verði betri fyrir sakir vígs, og geldur hestur, og sé verði betri fyrir reiðar sakir, og fylmer í stóði, það er metfé" ("a stallion's worth is based on its ability as a fighter, a gelding's worth is from its ability to be a steady mount and a mare with foal is subject to assessment").²⁴ This means that a mare could be potentially more valuable than a stallion or gelding in the right circumstances. This clause effectively removes the assumption that stallions are the most valuable horses and the need to define honor or masculinity by the stallion only. A man's honor and prestige may be bound up in which horse wins the fight and who has the better herd of horses, but is not connected to incorrect assumptions about the type of horse a stallion actually is, as we will see below.

Since a horse is a reflection of the man, and they are valued enough that injury and death are to be avoided, we can conclude that horses also indicated a man's wealth. The man who has a good herd of horses is both a good horseman and probably rich. Just like today, horses need saddles and bridles, and men need clothing and weapons. A quote in *Eyrbyggja Saga*, chapter 13, suggests that men were willing to spend money on the horse and rider combination.

Porleifur keypti þann hest er hann fékk bestan. Hann hafði og steindan söðul allglæsilegan. Hann hafði búið sverð og gullrekið spjót, myrkblán skjöld og mjög gylltan, vönduð öll klæði. Hann hafði þar og til varið mjög öllum sínum fararefnum.²⁵

[Thorleif bought the best horse he could get, and had withal a fair-stained saddle, and glittering and fair-light sword, and gold-inlaid spear, and his shield was dark blue and much gilded about; and all his clothes were well wrought withal. He had spent thereon pretty much all his faring-money.²⁶]

As another indication of horses indicating wealth, chapter 18 in *Eyrbyggja Saga* tells of Thorbjörn's efforts to seek redress and compensation for his missing herd

²⁴ Grágás. *Lagsafn íslenska þjóðveldisins*, ed. Gunnar Karlsson, Kristján Sveinsson and Mördur Árnason. (Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 1992/2001), 477–78; *Laws of Early Icelandic: Grágás, the Codex Regius of Grágás, with material from other manuscripts 1*. Andrew Dennis, Peter Foote and Richard Perkins. University of Manitoba Icelandic Studies, 3, Rpt. (1980; Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006).

²⁵ *Eyrbyggja Saga*. Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018).

²⁶ *Eyrbyggja Saga*, trans. into English by William Morris and Eiríkr Magnússon (1892). Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018).

of horses.²⁷ Thorbjorn sends Odd Katlason to ask a nosy neighbor if he knows anything about the horses. The meddlesome neighbor answers that the Mewlithers are the likeliest for horse stealing because they are penniless and they have recently had an increase in servants. The neighbor is suggesting that the missing horses are the reason for the Mewlithers's new wealth. Horses indicated status and wealth and owners did not want horses to be stolen, lost, injured, or dead.

Since Guðmundsson, there has been the assumption that horses can and do fight to exhaustion and death. He writes:

When two good fight horses were put together, their fight could be very long, perhaps hours on end. But then the fight was not held continuously, rather in so many rounds and with breaks between. Otherwise the fight was continued until one of the two horses fled (ran) or fell due to exhaustion or dead to the ground, and then a thunderous cry came from the spectators, after which time there could be either celebrations and victory cries or their displeasure was displayed.²⁸

It is unclear where Guðmundsson gets the notion that horses fight to the death because this is not described in any saga or historical source. In fact, in the fourteen mentions of *hestavig* in the sagas, there are no mentions of dead horses. Almost the opposite, it is made clear in the sagas that when a horse yields to the other horse, the yielding horse has lost the round, but perhaps not the fight. In addition, none of the sagas describes crowds shouting in victory or celebrating a victory. By the same token, crowds did not express displeasure either, although individuals may have started fights. Consider this telling example from *Viga-Glúms Saga*, chapter 13,

Og að skilnaði laust Kálfur Ingólf með stafnum. Standa menn nú á milli. Glúmur mælti: "Gefum engan gaum að slíku. Svo lýkur hér hverju hestaþingi"²⁹

[at last Kálf smote Ingolf with his stick. People interfered, and Glúm said, "Let us take no note of such a matter as this; this is the end of every horse-fight."]³⁰

And another from chapter 59 in *Brennu-Njáls Saga*:

²⁷ *Eyrbyggja Saga*, trans. into English by William Morris and Eiríkr Magnússon (1892). Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018).

²⁸ Valtý Guðmundsson, "Hestaþing fornanna," *Eimreiðin* 9 (1903): 33–44; here 35. As cited in Gogosz, "Horse-Fights: The Brutal Entertainment" (see note 1), 28.

²⁹ *Viga-Glúms Saga*. Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018);

³⁰ *Viga-Glúms Saga*, trans. into English by Edmund Head (1866), Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018).

Skarphéðinn mælti: “Vilt þú að eg keyri hest þinn Gunnar frændi?” “Eigi vil eg það,” segir Gunnar. “Hér er þó betur á komið,” segir Skarphéðinn. “Vér erum hvorirtveggju hávaðamenn.” “Þér munuð fátt mæla,” segir Gunnar, “eða gera áður en yður munu vandræði af standa en hér mun verða um seinna þó að allt komi fyrir eitt.”³¹

[Skarphedinn said, “Wilt thou that I drive thy horse, kinsman Gunnar?” “I will not have that,” says Gunnar. “It wouldn’t be amiss though,” says Skarphedinn; “we are hot-headed on both sides.” “Ye would say or do little,” says Gunnar, “before a quarrel would spring up; but with me it will take longer, though it will be all the same in the end.”³²]

The description of the horse fights in chapter 13 of *Viga-Glúms Saga* and chapter 58 of *Brennu-Njáls Saga* shows that men could get into fights at these events, and it was even expected, since a horse fight is a place to gain or lose honor.³³

In the sagas, the horse fights that are described are background for another event such as a fight between men. Presumably the audience for the sagas was familiar with a horse fight so there was no need to spell out the details. The end of a round of a horse fight or the end of a horse fight seemed to be when the horses separated themselves or the owners separated the horses. If the owners wanted to continue the fight after a round, then they moved the horses towards each other with a staff or having the spectators make the enclosure smaller. Consider the following two examples from *Viga-Glúms Saga*, chapter 13, “Voru hestar fram leiddir og bitust vel og þótti öllum hestur Ingólfs betur ganga og vill Glúmur þá skilja, ríða heim” (“The two horses were led out, and fought well, and all thought Ingolfs horse had the best of it; Glúm then chose to separate them, and they rode home”), and “Þá keyrir Kálfur stafinn við eyra hesti Ingólfs svo að hann svimrar og þegar eftir réð hann á. Glúmur gekk þá að og náist jafnaður og lýkur svo að hestur Kálfs gekk út” (“Kálf spurred his horse on, but Ingolfs horse had the best of it in every contest. Then Kálf struck Ingolfs horse over the ears with his staff in such a way as to make him giddy, but immediately afterwards he went at his adversary again. Glúm came up, and fair fighting was restored, till in the end Kálfs horse bolted from the ring”).³⁴ In the first example, Glúm has decided that his horse has fought enough, probably because the horse is losing, and decides to take his horse home. Horses under extreme eter-

³¹ *Brennu-Njáls Saga*. Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018).

³² *Brennu-Njáls Saga*, trans. into English by George W. DaSent (1861), Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018).

³³ Eric Christiansen, *The Norsemen in the Viking Age* (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 79.

³⁴ *Viga-Glúms Saga*. Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018); *Viga-Glúms Saga*, trans. into English by Edmund Head (1866), Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018).

nal pressure to fight would not be easy to separate and the separation could be dangerous for the person, but there is no suggestion of out of control horses in *Viga-Glúms Saga* or any other.

In the second example, the horse leaves the enclosure to end the fight and the people let it go. There is also no mention that the horse is cowardly for leaving the fight. Kálf's horse has just simply lost the fight. The longer narratives of horse fights in the sagas seem to be about men behaving badly and the consequences it can have. The descriptions of horse fights are more tales of how not to behave at a horse fight, i.e. do not hit the other horse with your staff, push a horse onto the human opponent, hit your human opponent and the like.

The most positive description of a horse fight comes from *Brennu-Njáls Saga*, chapter 58/59, “Síðan rennast að hestarnir og bítast lengi svo að ekki þurfti á að taka og var það hið mesta gaman” (“Then the horses run at one another, and bit each other long, so that there was no need for anyone to touch them, and that was the greatest sport”).³⁵ In the perfect horse fight, the horses interact with each other, separate, and engage again in order to establish dominance and the humans do not have to do anything, but watch. This is entertaining as well as productive for the horse owners.

The notion that horses fight until death can be contested if we observe natural horse behavior. Unless enclosed in a small space and provoked by humans, horses will skirmish until one shows a submissive posture and then they will separate. It is very rare that one horse will continue to dominate another horse after it has shown submission. The voluntary separation after one submits lessens the chance of injury because the interaction does not last long and often the aggression level is low. A horse uses the minimum aggression necessary with biting, kicking and other body language to get the other horse to submit. The skirmish/fight could escalate to more aggression if the horses cannot separate, but horses are not known to bite with the intent to tear off large amounts of flesh or kick with the intent to crack a bone unless an outside stressor is involved. Horses can misjudge a kick or the other horse can move into the area of a bite and become injured. The fact that horse fights could go more than one round suggests that the horses were given enough space by the spectators so that one horse can move away and show submission before the horses were moved again into a small space by the spectators so that they would engage with each other.

³⁵ *Brennu-Njáls Saga*. Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018); *Brennu-Njáls Saga*, trans. into English by George W. DaSent (1861), Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018).

Much can be learned about horse behavior from the observation of both domestic and wild herds. The behavior described below comes from many hours of observations of mustangs in the American west and the island horses of Chincoteague.³⁶ Horses live in small groups (herds) that can make up a larger herd. The small groups are usually comprised of two or three mares, two or three geldings and one or two stallions. Contrary to common lore, the stallion is not the leader of the herd.³⁷ The alpha is usually a mare but can be a gelding. The alpha controls the movement of the herd and in that sense is dominant, but horse social dynamics are complicated. It is possible that the alpha dominates the second horse and the second horse dominated the third, but then the third dominates the alpha. The responsibility of the alpha is to alert the herd to danger and flee and move the herd to water or better grazing. Good social dynamics in the herd allows each horse to have access to food and water without a more dominant horse chasing others away from nourishment ostracizing one animal so it is poorly socialized and dies of exposure or starvation. A smart horse owner would configure the herds in such a way that there is a range of dominant to submissive, so the horses could thrive. Horses are grazing animals and their stomachs need to be busy more often than not, so they do not colic and potentially die. A horse that is shut out cannot graze. Further, in cold weather horses turn their backs to the wind, stand close together to shut out the elements and rotate the animals on the outside of the cluster so everyone gets a chance to get warm. If the herd cannot get along, this system is not possible and exposure becomes a problem. Thus, proactive herd management could lead to fewer deaths from starvation and exposure, in spite of the high numbers attested from medieval Iceland; perhaps it could have been worse.

A horse meeting would be an excellent place to supplement a herd and build for each horse owner the strongest herd possible. This would mean that mares would fight geldings, mares would fight mares, geldings would fight geldings and so forth in every combination. The outcomes of these matching would show the horse owners which horses interact well together and what type of temperament a horse has. In Chapter 13 of *Víga-Glúms Saga*, Glúm indicates that horses have different temperaments when he insults Kálf's winning work horse by calling it a cart horse that is no match for the fine-jawed beast of the

36 Wendy Williams, *The Horse: The Epic History of Our Noble Companion* (New York: Scientific American, 2015), 29–37.

37 Katherine A. Houpt and Ronald Keiper, "The Position of the Stallion in the Equine Dominance Hierarchy of Feral and Domestic Ponies," *Journal of Animal Science* 54 (1982): 945–50.

Thverá people. The assumption is that the work horse is slow, docile and not very agile and the stallion is quick, feisty and nimble.³⁸

Mares and geldings tend to get what they want in a herd by patience and persistence.³⁹ Mares and geldings may snort, squeal, and paw in the air with the front hoof as a first interaction. They also might sniff each other nose to nose and walk away. They can also start grooming each other by scratching each other's neck or back with their teeth. This is a bonding process. Horses that are bonded will stand nose to tail next to each other. Horses that are not bonded will just avoid each other in the herd.

Stallions are much more exciting when settling their social hierarchy. A stallion and a gelding will behave much as mares and geldings do and these matches are necessary in order to construct a healthy herd. A match between a stallion and a stallion is where the entertainment is. When stallions settle their hierarchy they puff themselves up, snort and squeal, rear up, charge in order to bite, swipe out with the front hoofs and knock their bodies together to push each other off balance while they are in the air. Mares and geldings have been known to rear up at each other, but it is not the mainstay of the interaction. The myth that a stallion dominates a herd is most likely the result of particular cultures assigning to horses an aspect of their own social hierarchy and there is an example of a comparison between the quality of a horse and a person's manhood in chapter 18 of *Viga-Glúms Saga* “þú munt oftar hafa staðið nær búrhillum og ráðið um matargerð með móður þinni en gengið að hestavígum og er þann veg litt skegg þitt eigi síður.” (“you have stood by your mother at the dresser in the pantry and talked about cooking oftener than you have been at horse-fights, and that is the reason why your beard has never got any color in it”).⁴⁰ A good fighting horse is an indication of proper masculinity, but the sagas do not mention that the horse has to be a stallion.

As discussed above, observations of horse bands in the wild have shown stallions to be neither the leaders nor the most aggressive. It is true that stallions have killed foals from other stallions, but no one knows how often or why this is

³⁸ *Viga-Glúms Saga*, trans. into English by Edmund Head (1866), Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018).

³⁹ Williams, *The Horse* (see note 35), 28.

⁴⁰ Deborah Goodwin, “The Importance of Ethology in Understanding the Behaviour of the Horse,” *Equine Veterinary Journal* 28 (1999): 15–19; *Viga-Glúms Saga*. Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018); *Viga-Glúms Saga*, trans. into English by Edmund Head (1866), Icelandic Saga Database (last accessed on Aug. 26, 2018).

the case.⁴¹ The pairing of stallions at a horse meeting would be the highlight of the day's activities and horse owners would see the temperament of the horse and be able to decide if he wanted to breed a mare with that stallion and if yes, which mare. It would be very disadvantageous to take a stallion home for the year and find out that its qualities are not an advantage to the herd. Additionally, the fight allows interested parties to see how the horse is when being handled on the ground and how it moves during the interaction. The movement will show good points of confirmation and bad points that might not be visible by just looking at the horse. Since all types of horses were paired with each other, another interesting pairing would be between a mare and a stallion. It is unlikely that a mare in heat would be paired with a stallion because this could have unwanted consequences.

There is also no mention of a teaser mare being used for the pairings between stallions. A teaser mare is used to arouse a stallion before the brood mare is presented to him. This lessens the chance of injury to both brood mare and stallion during the breeding process. The teaser mare must be kept away from the stallion, preferably in a space where her scent can get out and he cannot get to the teaser mare, so he will mate with the brood mare. Mating with the teaser mare is wasteful and a result of bad handling. Since Icelanders did not just fight stallions, they had no need to provoke their horses.

Teaser mares are used to excite stallions in horse fights in parts of Southeast Asia. The stallions would prefer to get to the mare and not fight each other, but they are prohibited from doing so, by an enclosure, fencing or people. The horses are put under extreme external pressure that is not released when one horse shows submission. The release of pressure comes when one horse is dead. In parts of Southeast Asia, they are creating an unnatural environment and forcing horses to continue to fight until one is dead. There is no evidence that this was the same in Iceland. In fact, there are a number of indicators that fighting to the death was not the norm, such as the value of horses, the prestige of having good horses of all types, the prestige of being considered a good horseman and the fact that the initiator of a fight had to pay for injuries or death. It is unlikely with that law that someone with the best fighting horse would want to fight anybody because it would cost money every time if the fight was always to the point of injury or death. Medieval Icelanders placed more value on their horses as transportation, dams and sires, draft animals and pack animals, than as fighting animals.

41 P. Duncan, "Foal Killing by Stallions," *Applied Animal Ethology* 8.6 (1982): 567–70; Williams, *The Horse* (see note 35), 29.

In medieval Iceland, horse meetings were a place for people to gather and socialize while showing horsemanship skills and choosing the most compatible horses for their own herd. The heroic and family sagas as well as legal documents show how horse meetings were organized and how participants and spectators were expected to behave. From these written records, we can build a more complete picture of this form of entertainment than has been provided to date. A *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* allowed me to search the sagas for the words that relate to horses and horse fighting. Each entry gives the relevant saga and the example of the word in context, which usually indicates which chapter. Locating the entire saga then provides a more global context for the horse fight. In the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*, I found 25 examples of *hestathing* (horse gathering), 14 examples of *hestavig* (horse fight) and 268 examples of *hestr* (horse).⁴² With perhaps a few overlooked exceptions, these examples provide all the information in the sagas about horse gatherings horse fighting. In all the examples, humans are the only cause of injury or death to horses. Frankly, the horses are less likely to be injured or killed at a horse fight than humans are. So, not only does common sense suggest that valuable horses are not fighting to the death, the sagas provide no evidence for fighting to the death at all.

The sagas that offer a lot of information about horse fights usually provide a cautionary tale about how humans should not behave. The horses behave and they are not usually the focus of the narrative. Horses of all types are brought together, they squabble and submit and there is not much description of their actions because everyone presumably knows how this goes. The fighting horses are a matter of regional pride and there is a fair system of judging the rounds of the fight. Many of the longer descriptions of horse fights allude to the ability of the horse to fight well as an indication of honor.

In fact, having a fighting horse at all is an indication of prestige and wealth. There is evidence of men outfitting themselves and their horses well to attend these events. Horse gatherings and horse fights are practical events in terms of the exchange of livestock and entertainment as the horses perform so they can be evaluated. This is actually not very different from many horse events today.

⁴² A *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* (last accessed on Aug. 27, 2018).

Sally Abed

The Transformation of the World through Pleasure and Performance in the *Thousand and One Nights*

Then Dinarzad cleared her throat and said, “Sister if you are not sleepy, tell us one of your lovely little tales to while away the night, before I bid you good-bye at daybreak....”¹

Introduction

Upon reading the *Thousand and One Nights*, also known as *The Arabian Nights*, and thereafter the *Nights*, all eyes are usually set on Shahrazad as she sits on the bed to weave stories every night to king Shahrayar next to her. Readers and critics, however, do not give equal attention to the person under the bed. My article, therefore, simply attempts to resolve the enigma of the bed, or rather of the person hiding underneath it through a performative lens. As is well known, Shahrazad and her sister Dinarzad use the entertaining dimension of storytelling in the *Nights* to dissuade the king from killing a girl every night. The two sisters, however, take this entertaining frame of storytelling as a means to stage a dual performance to Shahrayar that emulates real performances. In the *Nights*, we grasp a perfect mirror of Arab entertainment culture based on various kinds of performances that include storytelling, music, poetry and dancing. While Shahrayar is primarily a listener, there was always an outside audience as well, and both within the fictional account and outside of it we can identify

Note: I would like to thank Albrecht Classen for his continuous support and inspiration throughout the revision process. Also, I am very grateful to my friend and colleague, Maha Baddar, for her comments on the paper in its initial stage.

¹ *The Arabian Nights: A Norton Critical Edition*, trans. by Husain Haddawy, edited by Muhsin Mahdi, and selected and edited by Daniel Heller-Roazen, Edition, 1 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), 18. The Arabic version is *The Thousand and One Nights (Alf Layla wa-Layla): The Classic Edition (1984–1994)*, ed. Mushsin S. Mahdi, introduced by Aboubakr Chraïbi and described by Ibrahim Akel. Vol. I (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014). Both are based on the Syrian manuscript.

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a specific, very important aspect of pleasure and leisure in medieval Arab society.

The stories the sisters tell, which contain wonders, poetry, anecdotes of performers, music, and so much more reflect the main cultural entertainment in the Arab world during the Middle Ages, which is the musical *majlis*. The *majlis* (from *jalasa*/to sit) meant an “assembly of people listening to music performances and competitions” of poetry, music, storytelling, etc.² People attend it to enjoy themselves and to learn from listening to each other and to contribute to “discussions and debates on music, history, theory, criticism, and aesthetics.”³ As we shall see, the medieval audience regarded the *Nights*’ tales as a source of leisure and pleasure, whether the tales were read or recited by street storytellers. The two sisters use the entertaining value of the *Nights* and of the popular art of storytelling in Arab culture to carry out their performance in their own private *majlis* (assembly). The pleasure the stories induce is emphasized by Dinarzad, who always describes her sister’s tales each night as ‘entertaining’, ‘amazing’, ‘wonderful’ and ‘strange’. However, their performed stories go beyond leisure and pleasure as they become a political tool that curbs the king’s murderous intentions. Such literary performance, I propose, has historical roots and is not born in a vacuum. It echoes the historical performances staged by various songstresses and performers in private and public spaces, not to mention caliphal courts, especially during the Abbasid era (eighth to thirteenth century). The lives, songs and anecdotes of those performers were recorded in Arabic by Abu Faraj al-Iṣfahānī in his work *Kitāb al-Aghani* (The Book of Songs) and were later added to by Ibn al-Sa’i (1197–1275 C.E.) in his book *Nisa’ al-Khulafa’* (Consorts of the Caliphs).⁴

Different from past studies that either focus solely on Shahrazad’s role as a storyteller and ignore the role of her sister, not to mention her presence altogether, or studies that focus on the two sisters to evaluate the sibling structure of the *Nights*, or interpret the sister’s adaptation in contemporary fiction, my study explores the performance of both sisters in light of real performances by women at

2 George Dimitri Sawa, *Music Performance Practice in Early Abbassid Era 132–320 A.H./750–932 A.D. Studies and Texts*, 92 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1989), 6.

3 George Dimitri Sawa, *Music Performance Practice in Early Abbassid Era* (see note 2), 7.

4 Ali ibn al-Husayn al-Iṣfahānī or al-Iṣbahānī, also known as Abu Faraj (897–967 C.E.), was an Arab historian, who collected and preserved ancient Arabic lyrics, poems, and news of the Arabs in his major work, the *Kitāb al-Aghani*. Taj al-Din Ibn al-Sa’i was a historian and librarian of the Mustansereya school in Baghdad.

the time.⁵ Scholarship on the *Nights* is, indeed, vast and varied. Themes of travel, storytelling techniques, and the reception of the text have been the object of numerous scholarly studies.⁶ In addition to these valid aspects among so many others, I argue that Shahrazad's verbal discourse would have never taken place without the aid of her sister hiding under the bed. The inclusion of the sister is significant on two levels. First, it changes the way we interpret the *Nights* from a series of stories with a psychological dimension to an intelligently staged performance that draws on pleasure and entertainment for its success. Second, it allows for highlighting the nexus between the fictional world of performance and the real one through reading the fictional work against the backdrop of the history and culture of entertainment at the time. The historical scene certainly inspires the literary one here, especially if we take into consideration that the stories in the *Nights* take place in the caliphal court of the historical Hārūn al-Rashīd (ca. 763–809 C.E.), who not surprisingly figures in some of the tales.⁷

Notably, the verbal discourse in the *Nights* is only possible through the spatial discourse. Throughout the tales, Shahrazad sits on top of the bed next to the king to weave her stories, whereas her sister Dinarzad sits under the bed to prompt her to tell a story each night, or to continue a story from the previous night, as noted in the opening excerpt above from the first night. The sister's position under the bridal bed sets the tales in motion. Together, the verbal and spatial discourses form an intricate performance of words and action with both aspects informing one another. To understand better the verbal/spatial performance that illuminates the entertainment value of the *Nights*, I turn to

5 On the sibling structure in the *Nights*, see Hasan El-Shamy, "Siblings in Alf layla wa-layla," *The Arabian Nights in Transnational Perspectives*, ed. Ulrich Marzolph. Series in Fairy-Tale Studies (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2007), 83–101.

6 On the themes of travel and transformation in the *Nights*, see Richard Van Leeuwen, *The Thousand and One Nights: Space, Travel and Transformation* (London: Routledge Press, 2007). Also see Pinault David, *Story-Telling Techniques in The Arabian Nights* (Leiden: Brill, 1992); and Eva Sallis, *Scheherazade Through the Looking Glass: The Metamorphosis of The Thousand and One Nights* (New York: Routledge Press, 1999), who talks about the early reception of the *Nights* in the West through Antoine Galland's 1704 French translation. For an indispensable and comprehensive study of the *Nights*, see Mohsen al-Musawwy, *Mujtama' Alf Laila wa Laila* (The Society of the One Thousand Nights) (Dubai: Sultan bin Ali al-'Uwais Cultural Association, 2007).

7 Hārūn al-Rashīd was the fifth Abbasid Caliph. Al-Rashīd ruled from 786 to 809 C.E., during the peak of the Islamic Golden Age. For more on Hārūn al-Rashīd, see Jalal al-Din al-Suyūti, *History of the Caliphs*, trans. H. S. Jarrett. Bibliotheca Indica, 87 (1880; Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1970). The author al-Suyūti lived in the fifteenth century. The original date for writing the book is unknown. For more recent research, see Andre Clot, *Haroun al-Rachid et le temps des Mille en une nuits* (Paris: Fayard, 1986).

the historical dimension,⁸ relying on Abu Faraj al-Iṣfahānī's comprehensive study of singing and singers from pre-Islamic times to the Abbasids, known as the *Book of Songs* or *Kitāb al-Aghani*, mentioned earlier.

The term 'performance' that I use throughout the paper is within the context of presenting a form of entertainment, be it a dance, a play, a song, or a story as in the *Nights*.⁹ However, I approach female performance from a spatial and narrative angle in such a way that subverts the expectations of a normal performance. Between reality and fiction, the examples I will offer show how performance and storytelling make women subvert the traditional role of performance for leisure and pleasure, and extend it to the political and social sphere through exploiting their gender as women rather than assuming a male role.

The closest term to 'performance' in Arabic is the word '*adā*'. However, it is clear from reading al-Iṣfahānī's *Book of Songs* that he neither uses the term '*adā*' nor bothers to define it, but rather catalogues the lives, stories, and lyrics of singers. The only terms he uses are *moghani* (singer) and *sha'er* (poet) and their female counterparts. For the purpose of this paper, it is more practical then to focus on the complex qualities of a female performer in Arab culture that make her an erudite entertainer like Shahrazad, and someone who combines various aspects of performance that I discuss at length later.

I start off my paper with a brief history of the *Nights* and some of its salient characteristics. In the second section, I briefly examine the role of female performers in public and private spheres in medieval Arab culture and use this historical perspective as a segue to the following part where I focus on performance in the *Nights*, as my literary example. I draw on the *Book of Songs*, as well as on Islamic art to corroborate my thesis and demonstrate the political dimension of performance that goes hand in hand with its pleasurable aspect. The third section is concerned with performance and worldmaking in the *Nights* as an extension to the historical reality with special focus on the spatial/verbal aspects. The

⁸ I would like to thank Albrecht Classen for drawing my attention to the fact that whereas the *Nights* have a vertical exchange between narrators like the King, the Queen and the sister, the European texts, such as Boccaccio's *Decameron* have a horizontal exchange among the characters. To expand on Classen's helpful remark, the vertical exchange is clear also in the prologue between the two brother kings on the tree and the kidnapped wife of the black demon under the tree. To claim, however, that the vertical exchange is prevalent across all the tales would be too far-fetched, but it is certainly there in the frame narrative and in the prologue.

⁹ One of the most recent works on performance is *Medieval Theatre Performance: Actors, Dancers, Automata and their Audience*, ed. Philip Butterworth and Katie Normington (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2017). The various contributors do not provide a definition for performance other than emphasizing its fluid nature.

last section sums up the relationship between real and fictional performances and the role of the dual sisters' performance in the *Nights*. The two versions of the *Nights* I consult throughout the paper are the latest Arabic Brill version of the stories collected and edited by Muhsin Mahdi, *Alf Layla wa-Layla* and Husain Haddawy's English translation of Mahdi's Arabic version.¹⁰

A Brief History of the Nights:

Contextually, *The One Thousand and One Nights* is of obscure origin and its history is difficult to pin down.¹¹ Most probably, it was a collection of tales in Middle Persian called the "thousand stories" that had been translated or adapted from Sanskrit at the time of the Sassanid dynasty (226–652 C.E.), the last pre-Islamic Iranian dynasty. Personal names, such as Shahrayar and Shahrazad along with place names, such as Samarkand preserve the Perso-Indian origin of the tales. During the Translation Movement in Baghdad, which lasted from the middle of the eighth century to the tenth century, an ample amount of Persian literature was translated into Arabic.¹² In the process, copyists "felt free to add local tales to the originals."¹³ From there "manuscripts of this original translation circulated to other parts of the Islamic world in various languages, especially Syria and Egypt," where more local tales were added and where the earliest surviving manuscript, which dates from fourteenth-century Syria, was composed.¹⁴ Subsequent manuscripts draw on the extant Syrian branch while others, such as those pertaining to the Egyptian branch, depart widely from it. Earlier manuscripts must have existed prior to the Syrian manuscript, as shown in the writings of the two tenth-century Arab scholars, al-Mas'ūdi (896–956 C.E.) and Ibn al-

10 *The Arabian Nights*, trans. by Husain Haddawy (see note 1).

11 For the background, I am citing excerpts of my own article: Sally Abed, "The Past into the Present: Teaching the *One Thousand and One Nights*," *The Once and Future Classroom, Special Issue on Teaching Medieval Arabic Studies* XIV.1 (Fall 2017): 54–68.

12 For relevant perspectives on this subject, see Maha Baddar, "Texts that Travel: Translation Genres and Knowledge-Making in the Medieval Arabic Translation Movement," *Travel, Time, and Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 22 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 95–119.

13 *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, ed. Sarah Lawall and Jerome W. Clinton Vol. 1 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009), 1050. See also *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, ed. Ulrich Marzolph, Richard van Leeuwen, and Hassan Wassouf. 2 Vols. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004).

14 *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, ed. Sarah Lawall and Jerome W. Clinton (see note 13), 1050.

Nadīm (d. 995 or 998 C.E.), who allude to a collection that seems to have been the *Nights*. However, these earlier copies did not survive.¹⁵

In the Middle Ages, the tales were transmitted orally and underwent interlinguistic translations into other languages of the region. Later, the written and oral transmissions of the tales intertwined as “oral versions [that] were written down and written tales [that] were memorized and added to oral repertoires.”¹⁶ The transmission of the *Nights* underwent a significant shift in its history of representations. Besides the oral and written traditions, in Egyptian popular culture the *Nights* was even broadcast on the radio in the 1950s, and continue to be broadcast on both the radio and the television until now.

The long continuous reception of the *Nights* is attested by the public recitation of the tales in both medieval and modern times. In the Middle Ages, there were storytellers who “devoted their performances only to love and adventure tales. These became a class of storytellers who related tales from *One Thousand and One Nights*. They were popular among the people because they represented another choice for the audience” that stood apart from religious and Sufi recitations.¹⁷ The performance of the *Nights* continued in the coffeehouses and the streets of Egypt well into the nineteenth century, as we know from Edward William Lane’s travel account, for instance.¹⁸

The *Nights* first traveled west in the eighteenth century. However, there was a remarkable difference in the nature and interpretation of the text by then. One major difference lies in the way the European incarnation of the text at the hand of the French Orientalist Antoine Galland, among others, “played a central role in constituting the image of the exotic Orient in the colonial discourses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.”¹⁹ As Heller-Roazen points out, “From Galland to Burton, translators, scholars, and readers shared the belief that the *Nights* portrayed a true picture of Arab life and culture at the time of the tales and, for some strange reason, at their own time. Time and again, Galland, Lane, or Burton claimed that these tales were much more accurate than

15 Daniel Heller-Roazen, “Preface,” *The Arabian Nights* (see note 1), vii–xiv. For Al-Mas‘ūdī’s and Ibn al-Nadīm’s exact report on the *Nights*, see “Contexts,” *The Arabian Nights: A Norton Critical Edition* (see note 1), 353–55.

16 *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, ed. Sarah Lawall and Jerome W. Clinton (see note 13), 1050.

17 Ala Yahya Faik, “Theatrical Elements in Religious Storytelling of Medieval Islamic Culture,” Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1986, 110.

18 Edward William Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (The Hague and London: East West Publications, 1895), 420.

19 Travis Zadeh, “Beyond the Walls of the Orient.” *Mapping Frontiers Across Medieval Islam: Geography, Translation, and the ‘Abbāsīd Empire* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 148.

any travel account.”²⁰ However, that “true picture of Arab life and culture at the time of the tales” that Galland and Burton assume is only partially true, since the *Nights* only depicts some aspects of the culture and not all of it. After all, it overflows with abundant fantastical elements, and, needless to say, the tales do not convey modern Arab culture. This was well understood by the Arab authors and copyists of the *Nights*, who gave “free play to imagination and inclination” and “have, through the centuries, woven Arabian Nights’ legends around the name of Hārūn al-Rashid.”²¹ Unlike the European translators and readers, for the Arab audience, the tales are “read with profit not for historical truth but for general entertainment.”²²

Importantly, the culture of the *Nights* that Western scholars and translators treat as a homogenous entity is, in reality, far from being so. As Fatima Mernissi aptly notes,

The tales, which are a symbol of Islam’s genius as a pluralist religion and culture, unfold in a territory that stretches from Mali and Morocco on the Atlantic Coast of North Africa to India, Mongolia, and China. When you enter the tales, you are navigating in a Muslim universe that ignores the usual borders separating distant and divergent cultures. For instance, in the tales, Persians speak Arabic and emerge as leaders in nations that do not share their cultural heritage.²³

In the same vein, Dinarzad’s presence under the marital bed reflects the porosity and fluidity between spaces and boundaries the same way the tales themselves go beyond spatial, temporal and linguistic frontiers. The sister who is expected to stay outside the royal chamber suddenly becomes part of this intimate sphere every night as she hides under the bed, thus crossing a certain spatial and social boundary.

Despite the various interpretations of the text in East and West, the additions to and subtractions from the text throughout its global tour highlight its nature as a traveling text, or as Heller-Roazen describes it: “a work in movement, caught in the passage from territory to territory, culture to language, language to language.”²⁴ Given this pluralistic origin and nature of the *Nights*, it has become

20 Daniel Heller-Roazen, “Preface,” *The Arabian Nights* (see note 1), xxi.

21 Nabia Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad: Mother and Wife of Hārūn Al-Rashīd* (1946; London: Al Saqi, 1986), 81.

22 Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad* (see note 21), 81.

23 Fatima Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West: Different Cultures, Different Harems* (New York: Washington Square Press, 2001), 43.

24 Daniel Heller-Roazen, “Preface,” *The Arabian Nights* (see note 1), viii.

part of world literature rather than being only a contribution to Arabic literature, especially because it is not initially Arabic in its origin.

The story within a story forms the narrative structure of the *Nights*. The frame story is about two brother kings, Shahrayar and Shahzaman, whose wives cheat on them.²⁵ To avenge himself, the elder brother Shahrayar marries a woman every night and kills her in the morning. This ritual goes on until Shahrazad willingly marries the king with the aim of saving the women of her kingdom, and with the help of her sister, she tells him a tale every night. The sister's inclusion in the tales takes place at the request of Shahrazad and becomes indispensable. But before we proceed with the fascinating performance of the two siblings and analyze it, let us first address real performers and their performances.

Female Performance in Reality

Female performers were part of the thriving public, private, and literary scene in medieval Arab culture. A full understanding of the skills of a female performer and her role is crucial to understand the dual performance of Shahrazad and Dinazad. Hence, this section examines female performers in both public and private spheres while considering issues of space, politics and artistic representation. This comprehensive view of female performers goes beyond the pleasure commonly associated with female performers and concubines to encompass learning, the cultural mode at the time and political intrigues.

While female performers were part of all the Islamic caliphates, I focus mostly on the Abbasids and their political capital Baghdad, since it is the capital of the *Nights* as well. In 762 C.E., the caliph al-Mansur (714–775 C.E.) established the capital in Baghdad, the City of Peace, whose glory lived “forever in memory and legend as the historic capital of the Abbasids and the magic city of the *Arabian Nights*.”²⁶ Performers and queens alike held sway at the palace. Al-Mahdi's Khaizuran (ca. 739–789 C.E.) and Hārūn's Zubaidah (766–831 C.E.), wives of the

²⁵ For literary parallels in western literature, see now the contributions to *Der Rahmenzyklus in den europäischen Literaturen: Von Boccaccio bis Goethe, von Chaucer bis Gernhardt*, ed. Christoph Kleinschmidt and Uwe Japp. Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift. Beiheft, 91 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2018). Curiously, the one significant parallel to *Thousand and One Nights*, Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*, is not even mentioned here. For a review, see Albrecht Classen, in: https://literaturkritik.de/public/rezension.php?rez_id=25356 Literaturkritik.de (Feb. 18, 2019).

²⁶ Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad* (see note 21), 2.

two caliphs, for example, “held lavish court at Baghdad.”²⁷ Both queens also engaged with performers and sometimes used them to achieve their own ends, as we shall see.

Naturally, the city became the hub of learning and power. Successive caliphs welcomed scientists, poets, musicians and men of learning to their court and depended on their contributions for the intellectual leadership and recognition of their capital. However, performers, especially storytellers, were sometimes unwelcome in medieval Baghdad as they were “often branded as instigators of rebellion In the Muslim year 279 (tenth century C.E.), states Tabari in his *History of Nations and Kings*, ‘The Sultan gave the order to inform the population in the City of Peace ... that no storyteller will be allowed to sit in the street or in the Big Mosque’.”²⁸ Similarly, when ‘Uthmān Ibn Hayyān al Morri, became the *wali*/ruler of the Medina, some of the nobility urged him to fight off corruption and banish adulterers and singers from the city. When Ibn Abi ‘Atiq heard of this, he asked ‘Uthmān to go listen to Sallāma al-Qas reciting Quran and singing. When the latter did, he was infatuated by her voice and good character and decided not to banish her. However, Ibn Abi ‘Atiq told him he had to lift the ban from the other singers too, so he decided to keep them all in town rather than banish them.²⁹

Such temporary ban did not stop public performances on the streets of Baghdad or even inside mosques. Women were even sometimes able to lift the ban and change the mind of politicians like Sallāma in the example above. Regarding performances, “Storytellers added choruses of women to their performances. These women dressed in rags and were called the “daughters of the chair” (*banāt al-kursi*). The ‘chair’ [here] referred to the *minbar*.”³⁰ There is little information, however, as to how the women’s chorus exactly functioned. Yet, here as elsewhere, the poetics of space are integral to storytelling in medieval Arab culture where many of the performances took place inside the mosque with the storyteller standing on the *minbar* (pulpit) and addressing his audience. The pulpit was, thus, the center of the performing area.³¹ Because “the religious preaching tradition provided the basis for using the *minbar* as a place of performance,”

27 Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad* (see note 21), 5.

28 Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West* (see note 23), 53–54.

29 Abu Faraj al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghani*. Vol. 8 (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar ehya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, 1994), 454–65.

30 Faik, “Theatrical Elements in Religious Storytelling of Medieval Islamic Culture” (see note 17), 109.

31 Faik, “Theatrical Elements in Religious Storytelling of Medieval Islamic Culture” (see note 17), 62.

the *minbar* became an important element in storytelling performance. It defined the area of the performance and the space the storyteller might use. It also conferred on the storyteller an important religious aura.³²

Besides this, women were part of the audience as we know from the twelfth-century storyteller Ibn al-Jawzy, who says that “Sometimes storytellers ornamented their garments to show off their graceful movements.”³³ Ibn al-Jawzy accused those storytellers of using the practice to attract women to themselves and cautioned that the audience must avoid such storytellers because they brought “corruption more than uprightness.”³⁴ Sometimes a storyteller shook hands with those women during the performance. Storytellers could attract large numbers of women to their audience by concentrating their performances on stories about lovers and passionate desires. They told of the beauty of passionate love and the pain of separated lovers and recited erotic poetry.³⁵ The twelfth-century Andalusian traveler Ibn Jubayr mentions in his *Rihla*/travels that he attended Ibn al-Jawzy’s own performance at the caliph al-Nasir’s palace at Bab Bader in Baghdad in 1184 C.E. There, the caliph’s mother and the women also watched from their belvederes and the public gathered in front of the palace gate to watch the performance.³⁶

Women also performed in the *kurraj*, which seems to have been a Persian game originally.³⁷ During the Abbasid period in Baghdad, Ibn Khaldūn (1332–

32 Faik, “Theatrical Elements in Religious Storytelling of Medieval Islamic Culture” (see note 17), 25, 63.

33 Faik, “Theatrical Elements in Religious Storytelling of Medieval Islamic Culture” (see note 17), 109.

34 Faik, “Theatrical Elements in Religious Storytelling of Medieval Islamic Culture” (see note 17), 109.

35 Faik, “Theatrical Elements in Religious Storytelling of Medieval Islamic Culture” (see note 17), 109–10.

36 Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr: being the chronicle of a mediaeval Spanish Moor concerning his journey to the Egypt of Saladin, the holy cities of Arabia, Baghdad the city of the Caliphs, the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, and the Norman kingdom of Sicily*, trans. Ronald J. C. Broadhurst (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952), 232. In *Maqamat al-Hariri* (Anecdotes of al-Hariri) illustrated by al-Wasiti, there is an illustration of Abu Zayd preaching on the minbar, while women listen in the upper register that shows women as part of the audience. Illustration from *Maqamat of al-Hariri*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, manuscript Arabe 5847, 1237 C.E., folio 58, verso: maqama 21. <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-abu-zayd-preaching-illustration-from-maqamat-of-al-hariri-bibliothque-90824147.html> (last accessed on Feb. 14, 2019).

37 Shmuel Moreh notes that the term ‘kurraj’ is a Persian word meaning colt, donkey, or mule, which suggests that the acting was of Persian origin too. At all events, the definition of the kurraaj given by Arab lexicographers is ‘a foal of wood with which one plays,’ or in other words a hobby-horse.” Shmuel Moreh, *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature in the Medieval Arab World*.

1406 C.E.) ascertains that the “dance was accompanied by poems and song and to the music of tambourines and flutes. Women also used to simulate cavalry duels accompanied by music, and it became a popular play and game during parties, wedding, festivals and leisure.”³⁸ Other historians and playwrights who remark on women’s participation in public performances are Ibn Sudun (d. 1464 C.E.). He describes a performance that involves an old woman and a naked baby girl, and his *Diwān* includes a scene where one of the characters is an old woman riding on the stalk of a palm leaf.³⁹ In Seville, al-Shaqundi (d. 1231 C.E.) commented on female street performers engaged in sword playing.⁴⁰ Likewise, Maimonides (1135–1204 C.E.) mentioned a hobby-horse actress dressed up for comical purposes.⁴¹ Women acted in other theatrical genres, such as masked performances known as *samajat* as well as *maqamat* (a series of anecdotes of social satire), such as the abridged assembly about fifty women, a *maqama* by al-Khayali (thirteenth century).⁴²

If the exact role of women’s chorus and how they performed is largely undocumented, at least the role of some of the prominent public female performers came down to us. Among those in Abbasid Arab culture is Jamila, an accomplished singer, poet, and *oud* player. She used to perform at her own house for the nobility and is described by al-Iṣfahānī in his *Book of Songs* as “Asl mn asul el ghenā’/one of the essences of the art of singing,” who taught several would-be-accomplished male and female singers. They resorted to her to judge among them and advise them. She went on pilgrimage with many male and female singers and they performed in Medina for several days. One time she gathered a crowd in her place and informed them that she planned to quit singing because of a dream she had. Luckily, men of nobility dissuaded her and assured her that her singing was divine.⁴³

Turning to the private sphere, Shahrazad’s character and skills in the *Nights* are modeled on public performers like Jamila, and also on performers in caliphal

New York University Studies in Near Eastern Civilization, 17 (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 27.

38 Moreh, *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature* (see note 37), 31.

39 Moreh, *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature* (see note 37), 34, 74.

40 Moreh, *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature* (see note 37), 35.

41 Moreh, *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature* (see note 37), 73.

42 Moreh, *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature* (see note 37), 49–50 and 109.

43 Abu Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghani*, Vol.8, 1994 (see note 29), 353–85. In the same source, Al-Iṣfahānī lists the lives and deeds of twenty-seven women performers who men competed with only to lose when faced with their erudition and poetic talent. For more details on those women some of whom composed books of songs, see the sections on Farida in Vol. 4, 337–42, Bazl in Vol.17, 53–56, Dananir, Vol. 18, 304–09, and Sha’era in Vol.19, 19.

courts. These performers were first and foremost valued for their intellectual abilities and skills that encompassed extensive knowledge of music, poetry, religion, literature, etc. ... Better known as *jarya*, a word loosely translated into slave, these *jawaris*/slaves were either acquired in slave markets or captured as booty after wars. More important than physical beauty was self-education and the acquisition of artistic skills, since they were “the only ways in which the slave woman could gain visibility and be noticed by the harem master.”⁴⁴ Al-Jahiz, a ninth-century writer analyzed in his writings the *jarya*’s relationship to her master demonstrating the *jarya*’s use of her power and skills to dominate her master. He explains, the kind of love (*‘isq*) inspired by a *jarya* is “a plague which reduces men to utter vulnerability,” because she holds men in a web woven together out of varied emotions operating at different levels that include love (*hub*), passion (*hawa*), affinity (*mushakala*) and the wish for continued companionship (*ilf*).⁴⁵

The emphasis different caliphs placed on the importance of a *jarya*’s learning is clear in Hārūn al-Rashid’s acquisition of two slave girls said to be highly educated.⁴⁶ To decide which one would be more fit for his company, he sent to Baghdad for Al-Asma’i, the prominent scholar of the day, in order to examine them. Al-Asma’i turned to the more impressive of the two and asked her about the learning she had studied. To that, she replied: “First ... that which engages the people’s mind in poetry, language and literature, and historical narration.”⁴⁷ The scholar then tested the girl’s knowledge of the various readings of the Qur’an, grammar and prosody, poetry and history, and found her exceptional in all disciplines. The second, however, though not equally apt, with proper training would ultimately also measure up to the first. Al-Asma’i’s claim that he had never seen a woman “take hold of learning like a man” shaped his verdict; a verdict that ensured Hārūn’s interest in having the first performer “prepared immediately for his company and pleasure.”⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West* (see note 23), 37.

⁴⁵ Al-Jahiz, “Kitāb al Qiyān” (“The Book of the Singing *Jarya*”) in *Al-Rasa’il* (Short Essays), Vol. 8 (Cairo: Maktabat al Khanji), 166–67.

⁴⁶ In addition to the example of the two slave girls, Hārūn was infatuated by other intellectual *jaryas*, such as Maknunah, Dananir, and Maridah. He was particularly enthralled by their voice and ability to recite and improvise poetry in answer to his poems. For more details, see Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad* (see note 21), 36, 138, and 143. Also, see Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West* (see note 23), 123.

⁴⁷ Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad* (see note 21), 148.

⁴⁸ Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad* (see note 21), 148–49.

Likewise, al-Rashīd's son al-Ma'mūn appreciated intellectual brilliance and especially enjoyed playing chess with women. The story goes that once a slave-dealer said that he showed a slave girl to al-Ma'mūn, "skilled in versifying, eloquent, well-bred, and a good chess-player, and ...asked of him a thousand dinars her price and [al-Ma'mūn] said, if she can cap a verse I will recite to her by a verse of her own, I will purchase her for what thou askest, and will give thee over and above the bargain."⁴⁹ Both father and son prized intellect rather than physical beauty only the same way Shahrayar prizes Shahrazad's intellect.

Royal queens too used and sometimes even joined jaryas to exert influence and wield power.⁵⁰ At the royal court, the Abbasid princess Ulayya (777–825 C.E.), daughter of al-Mahdi and a concubine singer, was a renowned singer, poetess and composer. She formed a singing duet with her brother Ibrahim Ibn al-Mahdi (779–839 C.E.). When her other brother Hārūn al-Rashīd acquired a new concubine, thus stirring his wife's jealousy, his wife, Zubayda, resorted to Ulayya. The latter assured her she would bring Hārūn back to her. Ulayya's strategy relied on composing a love song that speaks of Zubaida's passion along with staging a performance for Hārūn where 2000 women danced and sang her composed love verses wearing strange and colorful clothes. Pleased with the song that began with 'Departed from me, though my heart will not part from him', Hārūn shifted his attention back to Zubaida and distributed money generously among all 2000 female performers.⁵¹ In this incident, the thin line between queens and jaryas almost disappears as they all perform to the caliph. However, the plan to restore Hārūn's love to Zubaidah had to rely on intellectual skills for "a harem woman had no other alternative but to invest in her intellect."⁵²

Not surprisingly then, art granted a remarkable position for female performers, especially Fatimid art that portrayed women as "individual figures" rather

49 Jalal el-Din al-Suyūti, *History of the Caliphs*, trans. H. S. Jarrett (see note 7), 338–39. The author al-Suyūti lived in the fifteenth century.

50 See *Two Queens of Baghdad* for an analysis of the political role of Baghdad's two most powerful queens, Khaizuran and Zubaida: "The political and domestic roles of Khaizuran and Zubaidah reflect and continue the development of woman's position in the early Islamic state. Khadijah, Mohammed's first wife, was his staunch supporter who fully shared his confidence. Aishah, his favorite wife, played the major part in the first civil war of Islam. Several of the Umayyad queens had great personal influence on their husbands; others added grace and luster to the court." Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad* (see note 21), 10.

51 Abu Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghani*. Vol. 10 (see note 29), 368.

52 Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West* (see note 23), 93. On a different occasion, Zubaidah resorts to boy-attired page girls to "ween her son Amin from his interest in young eunuchs, which incurred an unfavorable public reaction at the time that spoke of the caliph's weakness." Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad* (see note 21), 212.

than “elements in the broader context of courtly and pastime scenes.”⁵³ As Mernissi notes, “Contrary to what many Westerners believe, Islam has a rich tradition of secular painting, in spite of its ban on images. It is only in religious rituals that the use of pictorial representation is totally prohibited. From the eighth century onward, Muslim dynasties invested consistently in secular painting.”⁵⁴

On a recent visit to the Museum of Islamic Arts in Cairo, I luckily stumbled upon an eleventh-century small bronze figurine of a female tambourine player from Fatimid Egypt. The caption below reads: “this is probably the tambourine player who told Caliph al-Mustansir (1029–1094 C.E.) that he would rule Egypt one day.” It turned out that the statuette belongs to a renowned performer by the name Nasab, who celebrated al-Mustansir’s rule over Egypt and the defeat of his adversaries. In return, the caliph gave her a large plot of land that she called *al-tabbala*/the tambourine player. Her influence was such that she had a mausoleum built to commemorate herself in the southern cemetery.⁵⁵

In this example as well as in those above from the caliphal court, female performers played a significant political role, whether directly or indirectly. Their influence was sometimes unwelcome though, as apparent on the occasions when they were targeted by authority or banned from public space. Performers, whether males or females, were also represented in multiple wooden and marble carvings at the Cairo Museum of Islamic Art from the Fatimid period.⁵⁶ The carvings show musicians playing musical instruments, such as the tambourine, the flute and the lute. In all those representations, among others, women are part of the public/private sphere and are active participants in the cultural and historical milieu.⁵⁷ The rich history of women performers, along with their exceptional characteristics, high education and representation in art extends to Shahrazad and Dinarzad in the *Nights*, who I turn to now.

53 Doris Behrens-Abouseif “A Bronze Tambourine Player,” *Metalwork and Material Culture in the Islamic World: Art, Craft and Text*, ed. Venetia Porter and Mariam Rosser-Owen (London and New York: I. B. Tauris: 2012), 217.

54 Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West* (see note 23), 15.

55 Doris Behrens-Abouseif “A Bronze Tambourine Player” (see note 53), 220. See the same source for an image of the *tabbala*, 219.

56 For a discussion of those carvings and for more details on the subject, see the entire chapter: Doris Behrens-Abouseif “A Bronze Tambourine Player” (see note 53), 217–22.

57 In her study of Western versus Islamic harem, Mernissi notes: “In both miniatures and literature, Muslim men represent women as active participants, while Westerners such as Matisse, Ingres, and Picasso show them as nude and passive.” Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West* (see note 23), 15.

Performance and Worldmaking in the *Nights*

The incorporation of Hārūn al-Rashīd, his wife Zubaidah, and some of the performers in a number of tales in the *Nights*, such as the story of “The Porter and the Three Ladies,” “The Story of the Three Apples,” or the “Steward’s Tale: the Young Man from Baghdad and Lady Zubaidah’s Maid,” underscores the performative side of the work that, in turn, corroborates my thesis that the two sisters stage a performance.⁵⁸ The integration of performers also alludes to the interplay of performance between reality and fiction, where words and the spatial dimension play a major role.

To start with, just as the structure of the *Nights* relies on the story within a story, I propose that the structure also relies on a performance within a performance. In the prologue, the narrator describes Shahrayar’s discovery of his wife’s deceit as a performance. From a place behind the garden walls, he sees his lady come out with twenty slave girls. Suddenly, the slave girls remove their clothes and there appear ten slave girls and ten slave men who engage in lovemaking while the queen calls for Mas‘ud, a black slave, who theatrically descends from a tree to make love to her. Later, they all dress up and again there appear to be twenty slave girls who walk up to the palace with the lady.⁵⁹ Adultery here is committed among a train of slaves, rather than two individuals. The setting is akin to a performance, which entails cross dressing, hiding behind the garden walls and hiding behind women’s attire. The performance here recalls the cross-dressing of the boy-attired slave girls who Zubaidah employed to ween al-Amin from his interest in young eunuchs.⁶⁰ It also recalls the colorfully dressed performers who performed for Hārūn to restore his love for Zubaidah.⁶¹

58 The integration of Hārūn, Zubaidah and their train of performers along with a comparison between the real figures and the fictive is outside the scope of this study. But briefly, the trick played by the poet Abu Dulama and his wife where each one claims that the other is dead to Hārūn and Zubaidah to earn money appears in the stories concerning Zubaida and Hārūn in the Egyptian branch. Inan, a female performer, and Hārūn have a pleasure session where poetry and singing delivered by Inan are central and echoes somehow the structure of the *Nights*. Also, Buran is another female performer whose praises were sung in the *Nights*. Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad* (see note 21), 47, 146, and 234. For a comparison between real and fictive characters in the *Nights*, see Julia Bray, “A Caliph and his Public Relations,” *New Perspectives on Arabian Nights: Ideological Variations and Narrative Horizons*, ed. Wen-Chin Ouyang and Geert Jan Van Gelder (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2005), 27–38.

59 *The Arabian Nights*, trans. by Husain Haddawy (see note 1), 9–10.

60 See Abu Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghani*. Vol. 10 (see note 51).

61 See note 52.

As much as the performance in the prologue is explicitly erotic, its counterpart in the performance that Shahrazad and her sister Dinarzad stage for the king when recounting stories is not erotic. The sexual encounter between the king and the queen is mentioned in passing and is intentionally devoid of any details because Shahrazad “realized that her husband associated sexual intercourse with pain instead of pleasure. To get him to change his associations, she had to work on his mind. If she had danced in front of that man, he would have killed her as he had all the others before her.”⁶² For this reason, the text places the accent on Shahrazad’s verbal or cerebral trait, which is “the essence of her sexual attraction.”⁶³ More specifically, the emphasis here is on Shahrazad’s “nutq, or capacity to think in words and penetrate a man’s brain by using carefully selected terms” to deliver her tales.⁶⁴ In this, Shahrazad resembles the examples of the real female singers and performers mentioned above, who, likewise gain power first and foremost through their linguistic, poetic, and intellectual skills.

The staging of the two sisters’ performance is clearly planned out by Shahrazad as the narrator tells us early on that

after preparing herself and packing what she needed, [Shahrazad] went to her younger sister, Dinarzad, and said, “Sister, listen well to what I am telling you. When I go to the king, I will send for you, and when you come and see that the king has finished with me, say, ‘Sister, if you are not sleepy, tell us a story.’ Then I will begin to tell a story, and it will cause the king to stop his practice, save myself, and deliver the people.” Dinarzad replied, “Very well.”⁶⁵

The plan succeeds and on the first night, “when Shahrayar took Scheherazade to bed ... she wept, and when he asked her, ‘Why are you crying?’ she replied, ‘I have a sister, and I wish to bid her good-bye before daybreak.’”⁶⁶ The king, then, sends for the sister, who comes and goes to sleep under the bed.

When the night wore on, she woke up and waited until the king had satisfied himself with her sister Shahrazad and they were by now all fully awake. Then Dinarzad ... said, “Sister, if you are not sleepy, tell us one of your lovely little tales to while away the night, before I bid you good-bye at daybreak, for I don’t know what will happen to you tomorrow.” Shahrazad turned to King Shahryar and said, “May I have your permission to tell a story?” He replied, “Yes,” and Shahrazad was very happy and said, “Listen.”

⁶² Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West* (see note 23), 40.

⁶³ Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West* (see note 23), 39.

⁶⁴ Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West* (see note 23), 38.

⁶⁵ *The Arabian Nights*. trans. by Husain Haddawy (see note 1), 18.

⁶⁶ *The Arabian Nights*. trans. by Husain Haddawy (see note 1), 18.

Thus, she begins to tell her story every night with the sister prefacing the *Nights* with almost the same words and ending each night with almost the words “What a strange and lovely Story!” To this Shahrazad usually replies, “What is this compared with what I shall tell tomorrow night if the king spares me and lets me live?”⁶⁷

The aforementioned excerpts set the tone for the *Nights* and form a recurring pattern very much in keeping with Nelson Goodman’s view that there are no worlds without words.⁶⁸ The world Dinarzad helps her sister Shahrazad to create is a world of words and performance akin to performances in reality. Just like the real female performers I previously mention, Shahrazad is highly educated:

[She] had read the books of literature, philosophy, and medicine. She knew poetry by heart, had studied historical reports, and was acquainted with the sayings of men and the maxims of sages and kings. She was intelligent, knowledgeable, wise, and refined. She had read and learned.⁶⁹

Shahrazad’s exceptional learning in several fields of knowledge echoes the extensive knowledge of the performer, who al-Asma’i put to the test to see if she was fit for Hārūn’s company.⁷⁰ Yet in addition to having control over “a vast store of information” like her historical counterparts, Shahrazad needs to master two more skills, namely: “the ability to clearly grasp the criminal’s mind, and the determination to act in cold blood.”⁷¹ The intellectual affinity between the historical and fictional characters, however, stops here for Scheherazade differs in that she employs her intellect to prolong her life and cure the king of his madness. As such, “the only dance she performs [with the help of her sister] is to play with words late into the night, in a manner known as samar,” which means to talk into the night and reveal one’s feelings.⁷²

Turning to the sister, who is not described at all in the text, according to Hasan el-Shamy’s study of “Siblings in Alf Layla wa-Layla,” in folk tales a “maximum exposure is allowed among siblings. It is common, sometimes as a rule, for brothers and sisters to share the same bed or at least sleeping quarters.”⁷³

67 *The Arabian Nights*, trans. by Husain Haddawy (see note 1), 18–20.

68 Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1978), 6.

69 *The Arabian Nights*, trans. by Husain Haddawy (see note 1), 13.

70 See note 49 for comments on the similarity between the real performer and Scheherazade.

71 Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West* (see note 23), 43.

72 Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West* (see note 23), 39.

73 Hasan el-Shamy, “Siblings in Alf Layla wa-Layla,” *The Arabian Nights in Transnational Perspectives* (see note 5), 84.

In the *Nights*, Dinarzad goes even beyond this common rule by sleeping in the royal chamber and hiding under the bed. In medieval Arabic literature, there is no precedence for such tradition. It is particular to the *Nights* and seems to be a purely literary device ungrounded in reality. Just as the pulpit in the mosque creates the necessary distance between the storyteller and his audience in real performances, the bed in the *Nights* acts as a pulpit and creates a safe distance between the king and the queen thanks to Dinarzad's presence. Her unexpected presence under the bed acts as a physical boundary that delimits the physical encounter between the king and the queen and initiates an intellectual encounter instead.

Though there is no precedence in Arab literature of a sister hiding underneath the marital bed, the notion of occupying unexpected spaces and hiding could be seen at work in certain performances. *Banāt al-kursi* or daughters of the chair, referred to above, who acted at the *minbar* inside mosques are reminiscent of Dinarzad in that they, too, occupied an unexpected space that had its own sanctity.⁷⁴ In the caliphal court, the musician Ibn Jami' hides in the secluded harem behind a curtain upon the orders of Hārūn, and the women enjoy his singing along with Hārūn.⁷⁵ In the *kurraj*/hobby-horse performances mentioned earlier, the player used to hide behind the drapery of the *kurraj*, which "had no wheels or legs to support riding players."⁷⁶ Shadow plays also depended on *khayal*/figures moved by a shadow-player behind the screen.⁷⁷

My last example of a hidden figure in control of a private space comes this time from the Arab baths/*hammāms* established in Baghdad and elsewhere in the medieval Arab world. The most precious thing in the *hammām* is the continuous flow of hot water. When scarce, the problem of communicating the scarcity of water is troublesome for the bathers, since they had to "communicate with the being on the other side of the wall ... the water carrier who is both invisible and unpredictable."⁷⁸ As invisible as Dinarzad, this being controls water and all the action inside the *hammām* though silently. "His intentions are undecipherable, and everything depends upon his mood; he can provide unlimited amounts of water, just as he can withhold it; master of the water and the fire, he functions

⁷⁴ See note 30 above.

⁷⁵ Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad* (see note 21), 151.

⁷⁶ Moreh, *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature* (see note 37), 37.

⁷⁷ Moreh, *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature* (see note 37), 124.

⁷⁸ Abdelfattah Kilito, "Architecture and the Sacred: A Season in the Hammām," *Research in African Literatures* 23 (1992): 203–08; here 205. I am grateful to the Alexandrian writer 'Alaa' Khaled for referring me to Kilito's piece on the *hammām* and the role of the invisible water-carrier.

in a way that seems completely arbitrary.”⁷⁹ Together, all these different examples, whether from performances or everyday culture, must have prepared the medieval audience to accept the notion of a figure hiding under the bed in the *Nights*. Furthermore, future copyists maintained both the figure and the notion as part of the unchangeable structure of the tales, while only changing the tales themselves. Perhaps both medieval audience and copyists realized that though an invisible figure, the *Nights* cannot proceed without Dinarzad.

Although al-Shamy suggests that “Siblings play a variety of social roles in narrative traditions,” he does not apply his argument to Dinarzad, who he claims, “is frozen in one role.”⁸⁰ He adds, “after serving as a sympathetic one-person audience for her sister’s narration at the outset of the *Nights*, she appears only sporadically in that very role.”⁸¹ This could be partly true given the repetition of the interjection at the beginning and the end of each night. However, Dinarzad’s “art of interruption,” a term Richard Van Leeuwen employs in his analysis of the division of the work into nights, applies well to the interjections, which structure the *Nights*. They multiply dimensions and meanings of the tales. As the nights proceed, the interruptions come to signal “boundaries, transitions, perspectives, empty spaces, intervals, separations, connections, gaps, breaches, differences, jumps, divergences, opposites and contradictions.”⁸² They highlight the dramatic function of the interjections. In a way, the interjections of Dinarzad at the beginning and end of tales are the subaltern voice or the voice beneath Shahrazad’s main voice.

Although the interjections are almost the same, the subtle variations they have underline Dinarzad’s multiple roles which negates her assumed frozen presence. In the first few nights, the conditional phrase Shahrazad tells her sister, “If the king spares me and lets me live” in response to the latter’s praise of the tales recurs.⁸³ Likewise, the king’s recurring inner thoughts are the following: “I will spare her until I hear the rest of the story; then I will have her put to death the next day.”⁸⁴ Gradually, the conditional situation with the king sparing Sche-

79 Kilito, “Architecture and the Sacred” (see note 78), 205.

80 Hasan el-Shamy, “Siblings in Alf Layla wa-Layla,” *The Arabian Nights in Transnational Perspectives* (see note 5), 97.

81 Hasan el-Shamy, “Siblings in Alf Layla wa-Layla,” *The Arabian Nights in Transnational Perspectives* (see note 5), 97.

82 Richard Van Leeuwen, “The Art of Interruption: *The Thousand and One Nights* and Jan Potocki,” *New Perspectives on Arabian Nights* (see note 58), 51–52.

83 *The Arabian Nights*. trans. by Husain Haddawy (see note 1), 24.

84 *The Arabian Nights*. trans. by Husain Haddawy (see note 1), 26.

herazade's life disappears from the *Nights* and Shahrazad's response has simply the effect that the following story will be more interesting.

By the same token, the king's reaction becomes different. On one night he exclaims: "By God, this is indeed an amazing story," and on another night, the narrator tells us that "King Shahrayar, with a mixture of amazement, pain, and sorrow for the enchanted youth [in one of the tales], said to himself, "By God, I shall postpone her execution for tonight and many more nights, even for two months, until I hear the rest of the story and find out what happened to the enchanted young man. Then I shall have her put to death, as I did the others. So he said to himself."⁸⁵ The interplay between the conditional situation of Shahrazad's precarious life and the confidence that she will be alive the next day to tell her story echoes the interplay between Sharayar's emphasis to kill her and his interest in the stories themselves to the extent that he becomes willing to prolong her life up to two months if need be. The excerpts also indicate that the interjections both sisters use to carry out their performance are effective. Gradually, the king is drawn unconsciously into the two sisters' performance and participates in it, first as a responsive listener, and then as a performer in the tales. His attention shifts dramatically from murder to stories that apparently elicit his "pain" and "sorrow" and touch his human rather than criminal side.

The king even starts intervening in Dinarzad's interjections. On one night, Dinarzad said to her sister Shahrazad, "Please, sister, if you are not sleepy, tell us one of your lovely little tales to while away the night." The king adds, 'Let it be the conclusion of the story of the demon and the merchant, for I would like to hear it.' Shahrazad replied, 'With the greatest pleasure, dear, happy King.'⁸⁶ The king's intervention here is different as he expresses his own wish rather than remain silent and passive like before. As Stephanie Jones rightly notes, "the presence of Dinarzad in the room with Shahrazâd and Shahrayar prevents shame. The structure of request and reply between the two sisters avoids the issue of question and answer between Shahrazâd and Shahrayar."⁸⁷ To this, I would add that Shahrayar becomes a responsive listener to the tales too and he feels he has the choice to organize and orchestrate the tales even though it is the two sisters, after all, who run the nights. His request to conclude the former tale is never actually granted for the *Nights* never indicate the end of a story. Instead, stories always end in *medias res* to be continued the following night.

⁸⁵ *The Arabian Nights*, trans. by Husain Haddawy (see note 1), 42 and 62.

⁸⁶ *The Arabian Nights*, trans. by Husain Haddawy (see note 1), 20.

⁸⁷ Stephanie Jones, "Emboldening Dinarzad: The *Thousand and One Nights* in Contemporary Fiction," *New Perspectives on Arabian Nights* (see note 58), 122.

The King's seemingly newly achieved power through and over words, thanks to Dinarzad's intermediary role, becomes more poignant as he sometimes repeats almost verbatim Dinarzad's words, which contain details of the story she urges her sister Shahrazad to tell. He asks, for instance, for "the story of Abu al-Hasan Ali (Ibn Taher al-Attar and Nur al-Din Ali) and what befell him with the caliph's concubine Shams al-Nahar."⁸⁸ He gradually becomes involved in the oral tradition that the *Nights* represent and becomes more integrated into the text. There is an assured yet cautious move from a passive listener, to an active listener, and later to almost a storyteller figure with the ability to repeat and pass down the tales as well to a larger public audience. His memory here functions constructively as he remembers the stories rather than destructively when he remembers the killings.

It is only after Dinarzad helps Shahrazad establish herself throughout the narrative that she, or rather the copyists, makes her disappear altogether from some of the nights only to reappear again in later nights. Whether the different copyists removed her interruptions to avoid repetition or not, her disappearance signals the direct interaction between Shahrayar and Shahrazad. Her implicit presence is taken for granted on those nights, which start with "And then Shahrazad said" Nevertheless, Dinarzad and her formulaic interjections appear once more and punctuate the *Nights* as a reminder of the frame narrative and what could happen if she disappears altogether and stops furthering this narrative. Without Dinarzad, the chaos of killing could have easily overtaken the imaginary world of the *Nights*. Hence, Dinarzad's role as a threshold between the two worlds deserves full attention.

Conclusion

So far, there are several intertwined layers of performance in the *Nights*. There is the performance in the prologue, the two sisters' performance throughout the *Nights*, and the stories of the real performers, which influence the author(s) of the tales in their depiction of the two sisters and their decision to include these real performers in the tales. All these levels of rich performances invite us to explore the entertaining value of the *Nights* through the angle of performance.

⁸⁸ *The Thousand and One Nights (Alf Layla wa-Layla): The Classic Edition (1984–1994)*, ed. Mushsin S. Mahdi (see note 1), 379.

Just as Shahrazad's strength of character and erudition reflect the political and social influence of Khaizuran and Zubaidah at the time, the performance she carries out along with her sister is supported by the reality of female performers in the public and private sphere. The enigma of the hidden sister under the bed cannot be separated then from the historical context of entertainment and performance.

Richard Burton, the famous translator of the *Nights*, who played up the erotic side of the tales for his Western audience, once said: "Without the nights, no *Arabian Nights*."⁸⁹ The same could confidently be said of Dinarzad: Without Dinarzad, no nights, no tales, nor a storyteller. Her power in furthering the narrative through prompting Shahrazad to tell or to continue a story every night eventually influences the king and bends his murderous instinct. In one version of the *Nights*, the influence is evident as the author/copyist has him acknowledge that he was completely mistaken in his anger about women: "O Scheherazade, you made me doubt my kingly power and made me regret my past violence towards women and my killing of young girls."⁹⁰

In the *Nights*, both sisters transgress the bans sometimes placed on storytellers and performers. To quote Ibn al-Jawzy's own words on the role of storytellers, "When the natural disposition was created, possessing as it did an inborn love for corroding pleasures and frivolous preoccupation which distract from those things that bring profit, it stood in need of a reformer, a teacher, and a warner to restrain it."⁹¹ The role of the sisters was to simplify, explain, and warn through their well-staged performance, which ties public and personal spaces, as well as real and imaginary entertainment, thus adding to our understanding of medieval performance and storytelling in the Arab world, and solving the riddle of the hidden figure under the bed in the eternal *Nights*. We also recognize how much these types of pleasure and leisure were just as important in the East as in Europe during the pre-modern period, if we think of Petrus Alphonsi, Caesarius of Heisterbach, Boccaccio, Geoffrey Chaucer, Heinrich Kaufringer, Poggio Bracciolini, or Marguerite de Navarre, among many others.⁹²

⁸⁹ Richard Van Leeuwen, "The Art of Interruption: The Thousand and One Nights and Jan Potocki," *New Perspectives on Arabian Nights* (see note 58), 51.

⁹⁰ Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West* (see note 23), 49. The excerpt translated by Mernissi is from the Story of the Birds, which does not exist in al Mahdi's version, but does exist in one of the cheap and more popular versions of Shahrazad's tales, found in Morocco's markets.

⁹¹ Faik, "Theatrical Elements in Religious Storytelling of Medieval Islamic Culture" (see note 17), 29.

⁹² See the Introduction to this volume by Albrecht Classen.

Chiara Benati

Behüde mich vor vngerechtem gude. Were Goods Won in Game “Unjustified”? Medieval Gambling

Despite the traditional depiction of the Middle Ages as a dark and brooding age, in which people suffered hunger and cold and spent their time doing penance and praying that the next famine and epidemics would spare their lives, medieval people were also cheerful and enjoyed various forms of entertainment. Board games, above all – mainly dice and cards – were extremely popular since they only required small, cheap, and easily portable equipment and could be played everywhere and in any situation by people belonging to all social conditions.¹

Given the popularity and the socially transversal diffusion of games and, consequently, of gambling, it is no surprise that they were also associated, even long after the Middle Ages, with a series of superstitions and rituals mainly aimed at winning in game. In a passage of his *Tractatus de Fascinatione* (1675), for example, Johann Christian Frommann reports of the habit of carrying a written amulet in order to have luck at cards,² while a more complex ritual to win in the dice game is recorded in a late sixteenth-century document from Königsberg in Prussia (now Kaliningrad, Russia). According to this text, in fact, one should first of all buy three dice in honor of St. John and then, before playing, moisten with saliva one's right thumb and, with this, draw a cross under the left knee. Finally, one should also recite a formula. The same text also prescribes how to

¹ See also Ulrich Schädler, *Glücksspiel und Himmelschach: Brett- und Würfelspiele im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998), 8–9.

² Johann Christian Frommann, *Tractatus de Fascinatione novus et singularis, In quo Fascinatio vulgaris profligatur, naturalis confirmatur, & magica examinatur* (Nuremberg: Sumtibus Wolfgangi Mauritiū Endteri, & Johannis Andreæ Endteri Hæredum, MDCLXXV), 710: “Fortunae favorem in charta lusoria ut sibi concilient, chartae folio verba, Virgo + alo + etc. inscripta secum portant etc.” (In order to propitiate luck at cards, they carry with them a piece of paper with the words *Virgo + alo + etc.*; here and elsewhere, I am using my own translation, unless noted otherwise).

write a sequence of symbols on the hand palm in order not to make mistakes when playing.³

In this essay, I will argue that a reference to gambling can also be found in the fifteenth-century German (Alemannic)⁴ version of the protection amulet belonging to the tradition of Pope Leo's fictional letter to Charlemagne⁵ preserved under the title *Keyser Karlens Segen* ("Emperor Charles' Blessing") in Zürich, Zen-

3 Alexander Treichel, "Kartenspiel- und Losglaube aus Westpreussen," *Am Ur-Quell: Monatschrift für Volkskunde* 5 (1894): 257–61; here 261: "Wiltu gewinnen im Würfelspiel so kauff in S. Johannis Ehr 3 Würffel, und gib davor alss sie dir gelobet werden, und wenn du spielen wilt, so mache den rechten Daumen im Munde nass, schreib damit ein Creutz unter das linke Knie. Sprich Friede mit Johanne. Dass du nicht verspielest scribe Hoc in manum + a + 6 + f a + o + 6 + + 6 + f + a + o + " (If you want to win at dice, then buy three dice in honor of St. John and pay as much as they are worth. And when you want to play, moisten your right thumb in your mouth and draw a cross under your left knee with it. Say: 'Peace be with John'. In order not to make mistakes while playing write this on your hand + a + 6 + f a + o + 6 + + 6 + f + a + o +).

4 On this, see also Heinrich Hänger, *Mittelhochdeutsche Glossare und Vokabulare in schweizerischen Bibliotheken bis 1500*. Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker, 44 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), 58–59.

5 According to Bruno Boesch, "Die deutschen Schriften des St. Galler Mönches Gallus Kemli," *Florilegium sangallense. Festschrift für Johannes Duft zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Otto P. Clavadscher, Helmut Maurer and Stefan Sonderegger (Saint Gall: Verlag Ostschweiz, and Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1980), 123–47; here 144, this "Emperor Charles" should be identified as the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV (1347–1378). I do not agree with this historical interpretation mainly for two reasons. The first is of literary nature: Pope Leo's fictional letter to Charlemagne is a literary motif, which can be placed in the tradition of the so-called "Heaven's letters" and which is attested in protection blessings and amulets from the end of the thirteenth century onward (that is long before Charles IV's time). In this context, the mentions of both King Charles (Charlemagne) and Pope Leo has no historical significance, but simply belong to the stereotypical narrative frame of the protection formula. The second reason is logical and historical at the same time: if one wanted to read the letter as a historically-reliable document, one should also try to identify the other person mentioned in the text, Pope Leo. However, this is not as easy as for the "Emperor Charles", since there was no Pope Leo sitting on the papal throne at the time the manuscript was written (Leo IX had died in 1054, while Leo X would be elected only in 1513). This would mean that Charles IV had received a letter from a Pope died at least some three hundred years before he was elected, which would not make much sense in a historical document. On the motif of Pope Leo's letter in protection blessings and amulets, see also Chiara Benati, "Against the Dangers of Travel: Journey Blessings and Amulets in the Medieval and Early Modern Germanic Language Area," *Travel, Time, and Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 22 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 120–64 here 147–51; eadem, "À la guerre comme à la guerre but with caution: Protection charms and blessings in the Germanic tradition," *Revista Brathair* 17.1 (2017): 155–91.

tralbibliothek, Ms C 101, fol. 106r,⁶ in which the scribe, Gallus Kemli, a Benedictine monk from Saint Gall,⁷ includes – among the various dangers against which divine protection is invoked – an otherwise hardly understandable mention of “unjustified goods”:

Dis ist der brief den babist Leo sante konig Karlen die er fart. Wer den by eme treit, dem kan keine leit geschen in wasser noch in für, noch kein armbrost mag en gesciessen noch messer stachel etc. kan jn nitt verwonden, vnd welich fräwe mitt eime kinde get, die genest gare gnedeclichen vnd wirt das kind selig gehalden. Auch tonner ader blicke mag dem menschen nitt geschaden, der ine by eme treit, vnd wann er vor gerichte get ader stet so kan er sin sache nitt verlißen mitt rechte. † Cristus ist ein wares liecht † Cristus sy mitt mir. auch herre, wan din heilges crütze geheilget haust mitt dim rosenfarwen blude, behüde mich herre in diner hude. † Cristus sig mitt mir an stegen an wegen und wo ich bin Cristus sy mitt mir vnd min frede schilt vor allen minen finden mördern vnd röbern, sie sin sichtig ader vnsichtig vnd behüde mich vor werntlichen schanden vnd vor helschen banden vnd vor eime schnellen tode vnd vor vngerechtem gude, min gott, min schöpper min hölfer min erlöser min zükünftiger richter. Ich manen dich vnd beden dich das du din rosenfarwes blut nümer an mir laussest verlorn werden vnd an der cristenheit. † Cristus viuut † Cristus imperat † Cristus regnat † Cristus me Gallum benedicat et defendat Amen. † Caspar † Melchior † Balthasar. Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat † Lucas † Marcus † Matheus † Johannes cum omnibus sanctis et electis dei me benedicat et custodiat Amen. † Thetragramaton † Emanuel † Sabaoth † Agios † O theos † yschiros † Athanatos. Das heilige crütze vnsers lieben herren die wisagung ysaye die barmhertzzikeit Daudis der lobesang Salomonis die truwe Jonathe die güte Abacuc die gestalt Moysi die truwe Danielis vnd die gedult Johannis vnd Jesu Christi die miltekeit vnser lieben frauen fride des heiligen crüces si züschen mir Gallo vnd allen min finden vnd behüde mir min lib vnd min sele min gût min ere. Amen.⁸

[This is the letter which Pope Leo sent to King Charles before he left. Whoever carries it will suffer no pain in water or fire, and no crossbow will strike him nor a knife or spike will hurt him. Pregnant women will deliver without problems, and the child will be blessed. No thunder or lightning will damage the person who wears it, and when he goes into court he will never lose † Christ is a true light † May Christ be with me, also when, Lord, you have sanctified the holy cross with your pink blood, keep me, Lord in your protection. † May Christ be with me on the way and wherever I am, may he protect me from all my enemies, from murderers and robbers, both visible and invisible, may he protect me from worldly dishonor, infernal bounds, a sudden death and unjustified goods. My Lord, my creator, my helper, my savior, my future judge, I beg and implore you that you do not let your

⁶ On the manuscript, see also <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/7046> (last accessed on Aug. 4, 2018).

⁷ On the life, scribal activity, and literary production of this monk, see also Boesch, “Die deutschen Schriften” (see note 5), and Rudolf Schützeichel, “Zur Bibliothek eines wandernden Konventualen: Gall Kemli aus St. Gallen,” *Studien zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. Rudolf Schützeichel and Ulrich Fellman (Bonn: Bouvier, 1979), 643–65.

⁸ Jakob Werner, „Segen,“ *Alemannia. Zeitschrift für Sprache, Litteratur und Volkskunde des Elzaszes, Oberrheins und Schwabens* 16 (1888): 233–37; here 233–34.

pink blood be wasted on me and on Christianity. † Cristus viuit † Cristus imperat † Cristus regnat † Cristus me Gallum benedicat et defendat Amen. † Caspar † Melchior † Balthasar. Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat † Lucas † Marcus † Matheus † Johannes cum omnibus sanctis et electis die me benedicat et custodiat Amen. † Thetragramaton † Emanuel † Sabaoth † Agios † O theos † yschiros † Athanatos. May the holy cross our dear Lord, the prophecy of Isaiah, the mercy of David, the praise of Solomon, the faith of Jonathan, the kindness of Abacuc, the figure of Moses, the faith of Daniel and the patience of John and Jesus Christ, the mildness of our dear Lady and the peace of the holy cross be between me, Gallo, and all my enemies and may they protect me, my body, my soul, my goods and my honor. Amen.]

Fundamentally, the text of this amulet can be divided into two sections: one, in the third person, lists the positive effects for the individuals carrying the amulet, who not only will be protected from water and fire, weapons, lightning and thunder, but will also have an easy delivery and be successful in court, and one in which Gallus addresses his prayer to God. The dangerous situations listed in this second – prayer-like – part are of both physical (robbers, murderers, visible enemies) and spiritual nature. Among these, along with dishonor, eternal damnation and a sudden death (without the time to repent and to receive the sacraments), we find the reference to unjust(ified), goods, which deserves further explanation. How could properties (*gude*) become so dangerous to be grouped together with damnation? Most likely because these had not been gained deservedly, but had been obtained immorally, illegally, dishonestly, or to the detriment of other people, rather than by the sweat of the face (Genesis 3: 19) and could, therefore, have negative long-term consequences for the salvation of the person temporarily enjoying it.

At the time the amulet was written, this definition perfectly applied to gambling and, in particular, to game winnings, as I will try to demonstrate in the following.

1 “*Der tiuvel schuf daz würfelspil*”

These words by the thirteenth-century *Spruchdichter* Reinmar von Zweter epitomize the main religious argument against gambling in the Middle Ages: it was invented by the devil in order to ruin mankind (*dar umbe daz er selen vil da mit gewinnen wil*).⁹ In his long instructive poem *Der Renner*, the didactic author

⁹ *Die Gedichte Reinmars von Zweter*, ed. Gustav Roethe (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1887; digital reproduction Charleston: Nabu Press, 2010), 466 no. 109. See also <http://archive.org/details/diegedichterein01reingooq> (last accessed on August 9, 2018).

Hugo von Trimberg (1230–1313 ca.) expands on the idea of a diabolic origin of gambling and states that, when two or more people play together, the Devil is present and observes the group.¹⁰ As a corollary to this reasoning, the Devil induces people to gamble¹¹ and players are described as possessed¹² or as “children of the Devil.”¹³ This religious condemnation, which for mainly pragmatic reasons is also adopted by secular authorities, extends both to dice and cards. Though of different origin,¹⁴ in fact, the two games could equally cause addiction and lead to the financial and moral ruin of the player.¹⁵

10 See *Der Renner von Hugo von Trimberg*, ed. Gustav Ehrismann. Vol. 2 (Tübingen: gedruckt für den litterarischen Verein in Stuttgart, 1909; reprint with a postscript and additions by Günther Schweikle, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1970), 80: “Der tiufel stêt vil nâhen hie bî / Swâ zwêne spilent, vier oder drî, / Und siht in mit flîze zuo.” (The Devil is very close and observes attentively when two, three or four people play.) On the author, the poem and its manuscript tradition, see also Albrecht Classen in the Introduction to this volume.

11 See, for example, *Die Gedichte Heinrichs des Teichners*. Vol. 1, ed. Heinrich Niewöhner (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953), 140: “da von ist er ein tummer man / der sich den wûrffel twingen laet” (For this reason, the one who lets oneself be forced to the play with dice is a fool).

12 Piero Bargellini, *San Bernardino da Siena* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1959), 123–24: “Un vecchio sdentato, con gli occhiali al naso, co’ dadi in mano e sempre in sulla baratteria, e parragli esser beato quando perderà sei o dieci fiorini e se per le prestanze o per altri bisogni del suo comune avesse a pagare un fiorino metterebbe a romore el mondo. È più contento servire a’ dadi grossamente, che servire al bisogno del suo comune. A questi cotali si vorrebbe porre siffatta prestanza da togliere loro la voglia del giocare. Che esemplo danno a’ giovani questi vecchi impazziti nel gioco, ribellati da Dio, e da’ Santi e dal prossimo? È meraviglia come la terra li sostiene!” (A toothless old man with the spectacles on the nose and the dice in the hand, always prone to trickery. He feels blessed when he does not lose more than six or ten florins, but if he had to pay a single florin to pay back a loan or for the needs of his town, he would complain to hell and back. He prefers serving the dice rather than providing for the needs of his community. These people should be given very high interest rates so that they do not want to gamble any more. What kind of example do these old people possessed by gambling and revolting against God, the Saints and their neighbors constitute for the youth? It is surprising that they are still alive!)

13 Sebastian Brant, *Das Narrenschiff*. Nach der Erstausgabe (Basel 1494) mit den Zusätzen der Ausgaben von 1495 und 1499 sowie den Holzschnitten der deutschen Originalausgaben, ed. Manfred Lemmer. 3rd expanded ed. Neudrucke deutscher Literaturwerke, Neue Folge, 5 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1986), 202: “Die spyeler sint des tûfels kynd.” (Players are the children of the devil).

14 The exact origins of dice game are hidden in the dust of history and are subject of various legends ascribing its invention to the people of Hêzar in Palestine, to the Lydians, to the Egyptian god Theuth or to Palamedes. For the Germanic peoples dice games had been invented by the god Wodan. Archeological evidence has shown that dice are at least 5000 years old. See also Walter Tauber, *Das Würfelspiel im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit: Eine kultur- und sprachgeschichtliche Darstellung*. Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe I Deutsche Sprache und Literatur, 959 (Frankfurt a. M., Bern, New York: Peter Lang, 1987), 9–11; Alwin Schultz,

The high popularity of games, which is reflected in a wide spectrum of sources ranging from literary texts and manuscript illustrations to listings and inventories of household goods and legal texts, could have catastrophic consequences, especially if they were mainly played for money. This circumstance is richly testified from the late Middle Ages onward. Eike von Repgow's *Sachsenspiegel*¹⁶ – possibly the most important law book and customary of the Holy Roman Empire – (1220 ca.), for example, states that a deceased person's gambling debts should not pass to his or her heirs, thus confirming that money was often involved in gaming and that this could lead to severe financial consequences for the player.¹⁷ The illustrator of the *Oldenburger Sachsenspiegel* goes a

Das höfische Leben zur Zeit der Minnesinger. Vol. 1 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1889), 531–35; Jakob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*. Vol. 1 (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1968), 124; Jakob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*. Vol. 2 (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1968), 841; Jakob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*. Vol. 3 (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1968), 58. We do not know much about the origin of card games either. They were probably invented in China and brought to Europe – possibly to Sicily – by the Arabs during the Crusades. See also Ludwig Herold, “Kartenspiel,” *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. Vol. 4: *Hieb- und stichfest – Knistern*, ed. Hanns Bächthold-Stäubli and Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1932), col. 1015–23; here 1015.

15 See also Herold, “Kartenspiel,” (see note 14), col. 1015.

16 On Eike von Repgow, the *Sachsenspiegel* and its huge manuscript tradition, see also Ruth Schmidt Wiegand, “Eike von Repgow,” *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, Vol. 2: *Comitis, Gerhard – Gerstenberg, Wigand*, ed. Kurt Ruh, Gundolf Keil, Werner Schröder, Burghart Wachinger, and Franz Josef Worstbrock (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), col. 400–09, and <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/werke/97> (last accessed on Aug. 11, 2018). In the following, the text will be cited according to the facsimile edition of the *Oldenburger Sachsenspiegel (Codex Picturatus Oldenburgensis)*, Landesbibliothek Oldenburg, CIM I 410), which, apart from being one of the four illustrated manuscripts of the legal text, represents the main Low German witness of the lawbook and, as such, is linguistically closest to Eike's original. *Der Oldenburger Sachsenspiegel. Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Originalformat des Codex picturatus Oldenburgensis CIM I 410 der Landesbibliothek Oldenburg. Textband*, ed. Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand. *Codices selecti phototypice impressi*, Vol. CI (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1995). On the manuscript, which was produced in the Benedictine monastery Rastede near Oldenburg by 1336, see also Irene Stahl, *Handschriften in Norddeutschland: Aurich – Emden – Oldenburg*. *Mittelalterliche Handschriften in Niedersachsen. Kurzkatalog* herausgegeben vom mediävistischen Arbeitskreis der Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, 3 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1993), 195–203.

17 *Der Oldenburger Sachsenspiegel* (see note 16), 83: “De den dat erve nimpt, de sal dor recht de schult gelden also verre, also dat erve waret an varender have. Duve, rof, noch dobelspil nis he nicht plichtich to geldene noch nine schult wan de, der he wederstadinghe untfeenc eder borgehe was worden.” (The one who inherits will, according to the law, pay the debts as far as the inheritance of mobile property allows him. He will not bear the costs of theft, robbery and gambling, nor of all the debts for which the testator has received a counter value or has been guarantor).

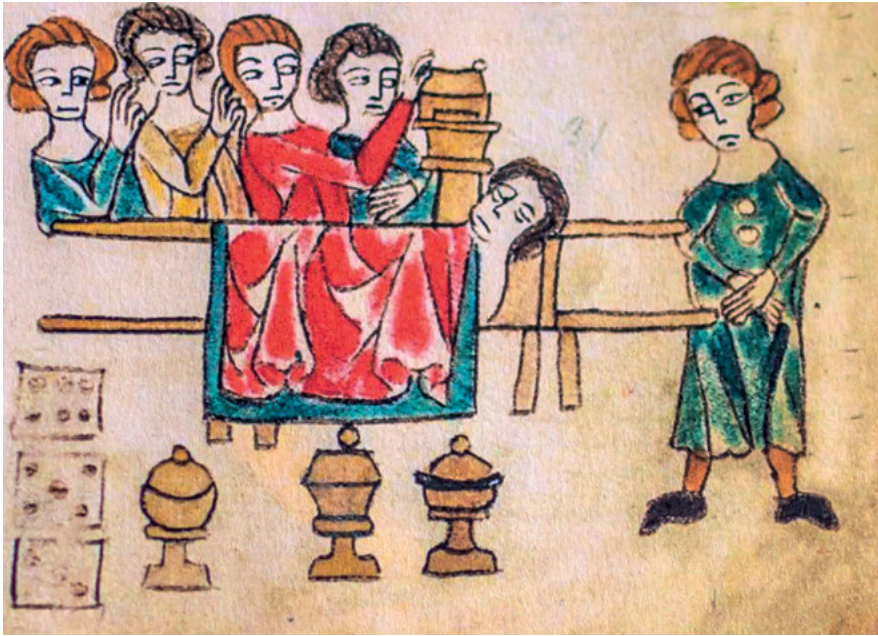


Fig. 1: Oldenburger Sachsenspiegel, fol. 10r



Fig. 2: Oldenburger Sachsenspiegel, fol. 10v

step further and identifies the debts mentioned in the text as gambling debts (symbolized by three dice),¹⁸ as if they were the debts par excellence.

The same identification of debts as gambling debts can be found in another pen-and-ink illustration of the Oldenburg manuscript referring to another passage dealing with the non-compulsoriness of the proof for the heir's own debts.¹⁹

Apart from players getting into debt, gambling is often associated with sin, moral decadence and crime, especially in homilies and religious writings. The itinerant preacher Berthold of Regensburg (1220 ca. – 1272), for example, describes the destructive effects of gaming in these terms:

wan ez geschiht manic tudent sünde von wüfelspiel, die sus niemer geschaeihen: manic tudent lip unde sele werdent verlorn, die sus niemer würden verlorn, der niht wüfel machte. Da kumt von mort unde diepstal, nit, zorn unde haz unde trankheit an gotes dienste.²⁰

[From dice game derive many thousands sins, which otherwise would not be committed. Many thousands bodies and souls are lost, which would never be lost, if it were not for the dice. Murder and theft, envy, anger, hate and drunkenness during religious services come from it.]

Some 150 years afterwards, the morally devastating impact of gambling on contemporary society still constituted one of the main focuses in the preaching of the Franciscan John of Capistrano (1386–1456), whose presence is recorded – between 1451 and 1454 – in various German-speaking cities, where he used to invite his audience to bring dice, cards, and game boards along with jewels and other

18 The illustration (Fig. 1) shows a dead man lying on a stretcher and covered with a double shroud (red and blue). In front of the stretcher three dice and three urns representing, respectively, the deceased's debts and his mobile heritage. Behind the stretcher there stand four men with their right hands raised in the act of taking an oath (two of them are even laying their hand on a relic shrine). These four men represent the seventy-two men in charge of reminding the heir of the testator's debts. On this, see also Gertrud Blaschitz, "Das Würfelspiel im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Würfelszenen in der Oldeburger Bilderhandschrift des Sachsenspiegels," *Aus dem Leben gegriffen – Ein Rechtsbuch spiegelt seine Zeit. Beiträge und Katalog zur Ausstellung*, ed. Mamoun Fansa (Oldenburg: Isensee Verlag, 1995), 307–23; here 314.

19 *Der Oldenburger Sachsenspiegel* (see note 16), 83: "Der schult, de de man silven schuldich is, der ne darf men ene nicht inneren, he sal er bekennen eder beseken" (The debts made by the heir himself will be either recognized or denied and no proof or witness against him is needed). While the text speaks simply of 'debts', the illustrator (Fig. 2) represents them with three dice and sets the scene in front of a judge pointing at the dice. On this, see also Blaschitz, "Das Würfelspiel," (see note 18), 314.

20 *Berthold von Regensburg. Vollständige Ausgabe seiner Predigten mit Anmerkungen*, ed. Franz Pfeiffer. Vol. 1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1965), 14–15.

luxury items to the market place in order to burn them. These ‘bonfires of vanities’ are described in various local chronicles, e.g., in Vienna (July 18, 1451),²¹ Meissen (March 12, 1452),²² Regensburg (June 14, 1452),²³ Nuremberg (August 10, 1452), etc.²⁴ Some historical records contain explicit references to the high number of game boards and dice, which were burnt publicly²⁵ after it was pronounced that over fifty different sins and crimes arise from gaming alone.²⁶

Similar remarks on the variety of censurable behaviors deriving from gambling are not exclusive of preachers, but can be found also in the works of other authors underlining how around the game board people are transformed becoming more prone to both verbal and physical violence, hysterically overreacting to every twist of fortune and irrationally envying and hating whoever is temporarily enjoying a better luck than one’s own. Already in the early thirteenth century, Freidank warned in his most popular didactic poem *Bescheidenheit* about the dangers of game at large:

Von spile hebt sich manege zit
fluoch, zorn, schelten, sweren, strit.
...
Spil tuot genuogen liute leit,
ez lêret böese kündekeit;
dâ ist lützel zühete bî
und wirt selten schanden frî.
Von spiel hebt sich grôziu nôt,
von spile lît ouch maneger tôt.²⁷

²¹ See also Johannes Hofer, *Johannes Kapistran: Ein Leben im Kampf um die Reform der Kirche*. Vol. 2 (Heidelberg: F. H. Kerle Verlag, 1965), 21.

²² See also Hofer, *Johannes Kapistran* (see note 21), 117–18.

²³ See also Hofer, *Johannes Kapistran* (see note 21), 139–40.

²⁴ See also Hofer, *Johannes Kapistran* (see note 21), 156.

²⁵ See, for example, the chronicle of Nuremberg of year 1452: “und an sant Lorenczen tag da verprent er auf dem Marckt noch seiner lateinischer predig, die weret nochen 3 gancz stund, dar noch zunt man an 3 tausent 600 und 12 spilbret und mer wenn 20 tausent würfel und kartenspiel und 72 sliten” (And on Saint Lawrence’s day, after he had delivered a sermon in Latin, which lasted three whole hours, he made a bonfire on the market place and burnt 3612 game boards, more than 20000 dice and cards, and 72 sledges). *Die Chroniken der fränkischen Städte. Nürnberg*. Vol. 4, ed. die Historische Commission bei der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte vom 14. bis 16. Jahrhundert, 10 (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1872), 192.

²⁶ See also Hofer, *Johannes Kapistran* (see note 21), 156.

²⁷ *Fridankes Bescheidenheit*, ed. H. E. Bezzenberger (Halle a.d. S.: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1872), 110–11.

[Very often curse, anger, blasphemy, swear and fight derive from game... Gaming causes damages to many people, it teaches evil tricks; there is little decency in it and it is seldom without consequences. Great disgrace comes from gaming and someone even died because of it.]

The beginning of this passage by Freidank is quoted by the contemporary Hugo von Trimberg, who groups this list of vicious acts together with theft, which had been mentioned a few lines before in *Bescheidenheit*, where Freidank stated that women and game could make a thief out of someone²⁸:

Da von sprach her Fridanc:
 'Von spil hebet sich alle zit
 Fluochen, schelten, swear, zorn, steln, strit.'²⁹

[Fridank spoke about this: curse, blasphemy, swear, anger, theft and fight derive always from gaming.]

The very idea that many players become thieves can also be found in a fifteenth-century single-leaf print from Augsburg, now pasted to the last page of an incunabulum of the Stiftsbibliothek in Saint Gall (Ink. 584). This anonymous partly rhymed text mainly consists in a warning against the dangers of gambling and an exhortation to repent for one's soul's sake.³⁰ The argumentation against gam-

28 *Fridankes Bescheidenheit* (see note 27), 110: "Durch wîp und spiles liebe / wirt manic man ze diebe." (Because of women and of their love for gambling many men become thieves.)

29 *Der Renner* (see note 10), 77.

30 See also Tauber, *Das Würfelspiel* (see note 14), 113–16: "Umb das leiden Christi willen, laß dich nit verdriesen, diesen brieff zû lesen umb das hail deiner selen. O Mensch, wiltu selig werden, / Im himel und auff erden, / Hût dich vor den schaden deiner selen / Und solt dich zû got dem herren keren. / O junger mensch, fleûch und meyd böse gesellschaft, / wan torechte weiber und spyles lieb / Machent manichen zû ainem dieb / Und sust raub und mord, Das geschicht an manchen ort. ... Jesus Cristus himel und erdtrich geziert hat, / An dem creutz ist gehangen nackert und bloß, / Wan sein hailiger rock ward verspilt mit loss. / Auch verspilest damit deiner selen kleyd, / Als die Juden habent gethan von geytika[i]t. / Judas umb dreyssig pfennig verkaufft Jesum das obrest gût; / Also umb ain klain ding und lust der mensch auch thût. / O, das spyl bringt groß sûnd unnd boßhait; / Das will nit erkennen dein blindhait / Und darumb so will man es entschuldigen mit listigkait und falschheit. ..." (For the sake of Christ's sufferance, do not be annoyed by this letter and read it for the safety of your soul. Oh man, if you want to be blessed in heaven and on earth, protect yourself from everything which can damage your soul and go back to God. Oh young man, avoid and flee from bad companies, since foolish women and the passion for gambling make many to a thief, and robbery and murder also come from that. This happens in many places. ... Jesus Christ has embellished heaven and earth, he has been hung to the cross naked, since his holy robe was cast lots upon. In the same way you gamble away the robe of your soul, as the Jews have done for greed. Judas sold Jesus,

bling is supported here by the reference to the evangelical episode of the soldiers, who after having crucified Jesus cast lots for His tunic,³¹ and by the comparison to Judas, who sold Christ for thirty silver coins.³²

2 “*Mag ein mensch das guet pehalten, das es mit spil gewunen hat?*”

In a frame of mind in which the behavior of players is compared to Judas’s betrayal, game winnings cannot possibly be considered good: as those thirty pieces of silver could not – according to Matthew’s account of Judas’ death – be put in the temple treasury because they were the price of blood,³³ the winnings ob-

the highest good, for thirty coins. People do the same for a small thing and for passion. Your blindness does not want to acknowledge this and, for this reason, they try to excuse themselves with slyness and falsity....)

31 See Matthew 27: 35: “And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves by casting lots”; Mark 15: 24: “And they crucified Him, and divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them to decide what each man should take”; Luke 23: 34: “... And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves”; John 19: 23–24: “Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. So they said to one another, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be’, this was to fulfill the Scripture: ‘They divided My outer garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.’”

32 See Matthew 26: 14–16: “The none of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?’ And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him. From then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus.”

33 See Matthew 27: 3–10: “Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’ But they said, ‘What is that to us? See to that yourself!’ And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood.’ And they conferred together and with the money bought the Potter’s Field as burial place for strangers. For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: ‘And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one whose price had been set by the sons of Israel; and they gave them for the Potter’s Field, as the Lord directed me.’” A different account of Judas’ death can be found in Acts 1: 18–19: “(Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out. And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)”

tained from a sinful and morally extremely dangerous activity could not be seen as legitimate.

For this reason, authors warning against gambling are often concerned with the question whether game winnings should be paid back or not. The first didactic poem arguing that they could not be kept is Konrad von Haslau's *Jüngling* (ca. 1280), where we read:

Wie vil ein man mit spil gewinnet,
ist, das er sich recht versinnet,
er muz gelden und wider geben,
wil er bi got mit eren leben.³⁴

[Whatever one wins at game, one should remember this well, must be paid back, if one wants to live with honor and be in God's grace.]

A similar opinion can also be found in Hugo von Trimberg's *Renner*, where the restitution of what has been won around the game board is put directly into connection with the winner's salvation:

Swër an sin sele gedenken wil,
Swaz der gewonnen hat mit spil,
Daz muoz er alles wider geben.³⁵

[Those who want to take care of their soul, must give back entirely what they have won at game.]

The legitimacy of game winnings is extensively dealt with the early-fifteenth-century homilies of Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl (1360 ca. – 1433), who maintains that winners cannot keep wagers, but distinguishes between the cases in which these should be paid back to the other player, and those in which they should be donated to the poor:

Wie man spilguet schol wider geben,
merckt das eben:

Nün mocht ein mensch sprechen und fragen: Mag ein mensch das guet pehalten, das es mit spil gewunen hat? Antwürt Bonaventura und daselbs maint auch Sanct Thomas 2^a 2^e,

34 Konrad von Haslau. *Der Jüngling*. Nach der Heidelberger Hs. Cpg. 341 mit den Lesarten der Leipziger Hs. 946 und der Kalocsaer Hs. (Cod. Bodmer 72), ed. Walter Tauber (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag: 1984), 15. See also Albrecht Classen's comments on this text in his Introduction.

35 *Der Renner* (see note 10), 81. Similarly also *Die Gedichte Heinrichs* (see note 11), 270: "davon sagent uns dew puch / das er spilgut, rawb, gesuch / nynnndert het in seiner gewalt." (The books tell us that he should have no game winning or stolen good in his possession.)

quaestione 32, articulo primo, und Richardus de Mediavilla und die andern lerer sprechent: Was ein mensch gewint mit spil im prett oder auf dem prett, das selb pesitz er unrechteleich und darumb so mag er es mit recht im nicht pehalten, wann das selb spil ist pösser, wann es ist wider got und wider alle recht, naturleich[s], chaiserleichs und geisteichs; ob er aber, das er gewunen hat, ist phlichtig wider ze geben, do ist nün ze mercken, sprechent die lerer: Ist, das der dayg, dem er das ding angewunen hat, ist ein solleich persan, der sein guet selb nicht versechen chan, als ainer der noch zu seinen pe[s]chaiden jaren nicht wer chomen, als denn chinder sint, oder [er] wais oder ain stumb oder ein ungehörunder mensch oder ein pettrissig mensch, oder [der] ainen andern ewigen siechtüm hiet, oder der nicht wol pey sinne wer und andre samleichew ding als trewen, er hiet im die augen verhabt mit valschen wuerfeln, mit lügen, mit unrechter gab, oder wie er in gelaichen hiet, wie das selb zü wer gegangen, so ist der, der gewunen hat, schuldig und phlichtig, das selb enem alsand wider geben. Ist aber der, der do verlewst, ain solleichew persan, die es mag verliessen und sein hab selben mag versechen oder ir vor gesein und hat enen, der do gewunen hat, darzü geczogen oder vast gebeutt zu dem spill, oder er hat in nicht darczue geczogen; hat er in geczogen dazu, so ist er nicht schuldig, das er ims wider geb und er mag es halt von im nicht vadem wann es gehort im nicht zue, das er es voder zu ainer penn umb die sündt; aber weder er mag noch sol es darumb nicht pehalten, sunder er ist schuldig, das er es geb armen lewten oder in armew kloster, da man sein pedarf oder zu (ainen) anderen gemainen notdürftigen dingen, oder mag im das hinwider geben und tue nimer ein solleichs spil noch zeuch nyemants mer darzu.³⁶

[How one should give back game winnings: remember it

One could ask: Can one keep the goods that one has won at game? Bonaventura answers in this way and the same opinion is shared by Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Teologica II, quaestio 32, articulus primo*,³⁷ Richard of Middleton and other masters, who say: What one wins at game, in the board game or on the board, is owned illegitimately and cannot be kept rightly, since gambling is bad and against both God and all laws, Natural law, Roman law, and Canon law. But, if it is compulsory to give back what one has won, you have to take into account this – say the masters. If the poor guy, against whom one has won, is a person who cannot take care of himself, as a minor, a child, an orphan, a deaf or bedridden person, or someone suffering from some other incurable condition, or someone not completely in his right senses or who has been threatened, or if one has been deceived with false dice, lies, corruption, and trickery, then the person who has won is obliged and compelled to pay back what he has won. If, on the other hand, the one who has lost is a person who can lose and who is able to manage and protect his properties himself, it should be considered if he has induced or requested the winner to play or if he has not solicited him to do that: if he has induced the winner to gamble, then he is not obliged to give anything back, and this cannot be claimed from him since it is impossible to claim back the penance for a sin. However, the winner cannot and should not keep it, but he should rather give it to the poor or to

36 Tauber, *Das Würfelspiel* (see note 14), 93–94.

37 See also Tauber, *Das Würfelspiel* (see note 14), 209.

a poor monastery, so that it can be used for their needs or for other charitable causes, or he can give it back and never play that game or induce anyone to gamble again.]

The distinction between the two circumstances is mainly based on the profile and condition of the loser and on his/her degree of willingness to engage in gambling: the goods won on the table against a physically or spiritually-impaired, not fully capable person or defrauded by means of cheating (e.g., using false dice or other tricks) have to be paid back to the loser. No claim for restitution can, on the other hand, be put forward, if the loser is fully capable, since the lost money or properties represent the penance for the sin committed when engaging in the game. This does not mean, however, that game winnings, which are the result of an activity violating both the human and the divine law, can be kept: for his own spiritual good, the winner should use them for charitable purposes or give them back to their owner, thus – at least partially – doing penance for the sin of gambling. The severity of this sin is underlined by Dinkelsbühl, who, later in the same homily, defines it “mortal”.³⁸

3 Conclusion

As the literary, legal and homiletic sources presented in this study have shown, at the time of the writing of the Alemannic version of Pope Leo's fictional letter to Charlemagne transmitted in the Zürich manuscript C101, i.e., in the fifteenth century, despite its popularity, gambling had already been facing social and moral ostracism for centuries. Not only, in fact, the Church rejected gambling as a devilish activity potentially ruining mankind, but also secular authorities demonstrated concern about the socially destructive effects of gambling, which, apart from possibly being the main cause of indebtedness, was usually associated with the increase of crime, violence and corruption.

³⁸ Tauber, *Das Würfelspiel* (see note 14), 94: “Hat aber chain(en)er den andern zum spill nicht geczogen und haben selber willichleichen miteinander gespilt durich ir geitichait willen, so haben sy paid todleich gesund, und was ainer dem andern angewint, das muess er (er) alles armen lewten geben und muess über die selb todsündt rechte rew haben, anders wirt im die selb sund nicht vergeben, noch kain andre vergeben, an zweyfel, also sprechent die lerer” (If none of them has incited the other to play and both have willingly started to play because of their greed, then they have both committed a mortal sin and what one has won from the other must be entirely given to the poor. They must also sincerely regret their mortal sin, otherwise it will not be forgiven, nor any other will for sure be forgiven, as the masters say).

Despite secular prohibitions and religious reprobation, however, dice and cards continued to assume a fundamental role in medieval and early modern society especially with regard to its very function of providing entertainment and leisure. This is, again, witnessed not only by the vehemence of fifteenth-century preachers and theologians such as Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl or John of Capistrano, who condemned gambling and included its instruments and symbols in the number of objects to be publicly burnt in the so-called 'bonfires of vanities,' but also by the satirical remarks of a famous satirical Humanist author, Sebastian Brant, who, in chapter seventy-seven of his famous *Narrenschiff* (1494), derides players by describing them as people who spend entire days and nights in front of a board, forgetting everything else.³⁹

In this context, it appears fully legitimate to assume that the *vngerechtes gude*, against which one needs to be protected, refers in the Zürich amulet to luck at games in general and to game winnings in particular. Since gambling was considered a censurable and sinful activity, any sum, property, or advantage obtained by means of the board game could be compared to Judas's thirty pieces of silver and necessarily fulfilled all the above-listed conditions possibly explaining how a property gained through such a game could turn into something so negative and dangerous to be grouped together with damnation and sudden death, and hence had to be protected against. Provided they had not been achieved fraudulently and, consequently, dishonestly, wagers were not the result of work, but simply of luck and dexterity and, as such, had not been deserved. Furthermore, deriving from a highly immoral and often illegal activity, game winnings were also immoral and illegal. Finally, one player's victory and success corresponded to the other's detriment and ruin.

For all these reasons, for the soul and the salvation of the winner, game winnings could become at least as dangerous as a sudden death not allowing a Christian to repent and to receive the comfort of the sacraments, which makes more than plausible that Gallus Kemli, the scribe of the Zürich manuscript, inserted a reference to them, while listing a series of manifestly hazardous and humanly inevitable circumstances, against which the amulet guarantees divine protection. The very fact that a monk mentioned a gambling-related spiritual danger in the text of an amulet, which, as the presence of his own name indicates, was thought for his own use and advantage,⁴⁰ suggests that despite social

³⁹ Brant, *Das Narrenschiff* (see note 13), 199. On this, see also Albrecht Classen in the Introduction to this volume.

⁴⁰ On this, see also Wolfgang Ernst, *Beschwörungen und Segen. Angewandte Psychotherapie im Mittelalter* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau, 2011), 294 and Benati, "À la guerre comme" (see note 5), 174.

criticism, preaching, theological argumentations and publicly burnt dice, cards, and game boards, games and gambling continued to fascinate medieval and early modern people, whether inside or outside the walls of a monastery. In our case, this fascination must have been so strong that only God could help a poor monk to resist.

Alex Ukropen

Aldhelm's *Enigmata* and the Commentaries from the Canterbury School: A Monastic Curriculum in Play

In Anglo-Saxon monasteries, pleasure seemed only acceptable when it yielded spiritual progress. At the end of the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (ca. 731), the Venerable Bede comments on the pleasure he took in scholastic activities: “atque inter obseruantiam disciplinae regularis, et cotidianam cantandi in ecclesia curam, semper aut discere aut docere aut scribere dulce habui”¹ (and between the observation of the discipline of the Rule and the daily office of singing in church, I always considered it a pleasure to learn or to teach or to write). While it was perfectly acceptable to take joy in important means of production, it appears that pleasures such as games – pastimes that did not offer meaningful contributions to the monastery – were probably frowned upon.² For instance, the third chapter of book one in the anonymous *Life of St. Cuthbert* and the first chapter of Bede’s prose text of the *Life* relate that in his youth, the saint played children’s games with great prowess, and while this may seem positive, it is presented as an obstacle in the way of his greater duties. A younger child miraculously prophesies that Cuthbert will become a bishop and priest and reprimands him for spending time and effort on meaningless games. Gameplay in this story was seen as a hindrance to Cuthbert’s divine duties and foregoing them was his first step on his path to his true destiny.³ Moreover, descriptions of games in monastic settings are almost unheard of in Anglo-Saxon texts. There are a few mentions of “tæfl,” a medieval board game, in *Fortunes of Men* and *Maxims I* of the

1 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors. Oxford Medieval Texts (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 566.

2 See Chiara Benati’s contribution to this volume. Benati describes issues the church had with gambling in the later medieval period and how playing such games was considered sinful and morally depraved. For the curious phenomenon of playing tennis in monasteries, as reported since the late Middle Ages, see the Introduction by Albrecht Classen and the contribution to this volume by Marilyn L. Sandidge.

3 *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede’s Prose Life*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave (1940; New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 64–66 and 154–58.

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tenth-century Exeter Book, but they are otherwise mostly absent.⁴ However, riddles became popular in monastic institutions in Anglo-Saxon England and on the continent, a tradition that Aldhelm, Abbot of Malmesbury and Bishop of Sherborne (ca. 639–709), began with the composition of his *Enigmata*.⁵ These riddles may have transgressed the fine line between gameplay and learning, balancing the two just enough to become a permissible, if not encouraged, mode of play in monastic institutions. Although these riddles had the potential to teach poetic meter, mathematics, such as in the case of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim,⁶ and the intricacies of Latin, linguistic analysis seems to stand at the forefront. Scholars like Mercedes Salvador-Bello and Nicholas Howe have established that the *Enigmata* drew heavily from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, an encyclopedic work that covered the natural sciences with a focus on the etymological significance of words.⁷

4 *The Exeter Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie. The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), 156 and 162. For information on “tæfl,” see Martha Bayless, “Alea, Tæfl, and Related Games: Vocabulary and Context,” *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. Andy Orchard and Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe. Toronto Old English Studies (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2005), vol. 2, 9–27.

5 Mercedes Salvador-Bello, *Isidorean Perceptions of Order: The Exeter Book Riddles and Medieval Latin Enigmata* (Morgantown, VA: Western Virginia University Press, 2015), 15–16.

6 See *The Plays of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim*, trans. Katharina Wilson. Garland Library of Medieval Literature, 51 Series B (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1989). Wilson observes that Hrotsvit of Gandersheim, a “tenth-century canoness of the Saxon imperial Abbey of Gandersheim” (xi), included a mathematical riddle in her play, *The Martyrdom of the Holy Virgins Fides, Spes, and Caritas (Sapientia)*. Sapientia, the protagonist, and her three children (named Fides, Spes, and Caritas) are sent to the emperor, Hadrian, for exhorting Christian doctrine (126). When the emperor asks how old the children are, Sapientia decides to baffle him with a mathematical riddle that serves as an algorithm to determine their ages. After much discussion on diminished, augmented, perfect, evenly even, and unevenly even numbers, Sapientia praises God for creating order, which can be seen in the laws of mathematics (129–32). Hadrian fails to solve the riddle and orders them to be executed after they refuse to convert, thus making them martyrs. Nevertheless, the play goes through great lengths to provide this mathematical riddle. Leaving it unsolved ultimately encourages the readers to outwit the emperor and take with them a greater understanding of calculation.

7 See Salvador-Bello, *Isidorean Perceptions of Order* (see note 5); Nicholas Howe, “Aldhelm’s *Enigmata* and Isidorian Etymology,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 14 (1985): 37–59; Philip G. Rusche, “Isidore’s *Etymologiae* and the Canterbury Aldhelm Scholia,” *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 104.4 (2005): 437–55; M. L. Cameron, “Aldhelm as a Naturalist: A Re-Examination of Some of His *Enigmata*,” *Peritia* 4 (1985): 117–33.

Aldhelm used the late-Latin poet Symphosius as a model for his own work,⁸ but he added a greater emphasis on the etymological aspects of the genre that reflected the scholarly rigors of the monastery. This paper seeks to understand why the *Enigmata* placed such an emphasis on linguistic analysis, a quality that would carry over into later medieval riddles. Aldhelm's education at Canterbury introduced him to diverse scholarly disciplines that came from the unlikely and unusual arrival of Archbishop Theodore of Tarsus and Abbot Hadrian. The commentaries produced at Canterbury during their time indicates that they preferred the Antiochene method of exegesis over the Alexandrian, following literal interpretation over allegorical. Among many other sources, the commentaries draw upon Isidore's *Etymologiae*, analyzing the Bible through an encyclopedic, linguistic lens. Aldhelm's *Enigmata* encourages players to utilize the methodologies that the Canterbury School implemented in biblical exegesis, and this form of play expresses the values that came about from this unique, cultural blending that occurred at the school.

Aldhelm's introduction in the *Epistola ad Acircium*, a letter supposedly intended for the scholar-king Aldfrith of Northumbria (r. 685–704/5) that includes the *Enigmata*,⁹ implies that the riddles served as examples of dactylic hexameter. However, the many layers of scientific, biblical, and Isidorian etymological meaning subvert the notion that they were only for that purpose. Manuscripts containing the *Enigmata* show through glosses that readers looked for Isidorian connections, drawing upon the *Etymologiae* to achieve a greater understanding of the linguistic and scientific elements in the riddles. Similarly, the few extant commentaries written at Archbishop Theodore's and Hadrian's school rely on the same literal, linguistically focused analysis that the enigmas seem to test; where the commentaries explain the etymological significance of a word, the riddles play the reverse, they provide the etymology and let the reader figure out the word.¹⁰ Through this acceptable form of play, the *Enigmata* of Aldhelm reveals a practice that values the training of this style of learning which continued on in the Exeter Book riddles, even as they lacked the metrical form that Aldhelm

8 Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*. Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 155–61.

9 Michael Lapidge, "The Career of Aldhelm," *Anglo-Saxon England* 36 (2007): 15–69.

10 See Andy Orchard, "Enigma Variations: The Anglo-Saxon Riddle-Tradition," *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. Andy Orchard and Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe. Toronto Old English Studies (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2005), vol. I, 284–304. Orchard addresses the long-standing paradox that the answers were always included with the text. He mentions that not every manuscript of the *Enigmata* included the answers, and some only in the margins.

insisted upon. While the genre and form of the *Enigmata* were inspired by Symphosius, and there is little doubt that much of the content owes itself to Isidore, evidence here suggests that the riddles contained qualities concurrent with exegetical practices used in the curriculum at Canterbury.

Considered the father of Anglo-Saxon Latin writing, Aldhelm not only began the riddle tradition in England, but was also an influential figure because he was perhaps the first Anglo-Saxon writer to produce complex Latin poetry and prose. While Bede mentions him briefly, most details of his life are recorded in Faricius of Arezzo's (d. 1117) *Life of St. Aldhelm* and in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta pontificum Anglorum* (ca. 1125), and as their accounts were written long after his death, they leave a lacuna in his history that scholars have worked to fill; nevertheless, his texts continued to be studied in the tenth century during the Benedictine reform: his most recognized works are the *Carmen de virginitate* and *De laude virginitatis*, written in the "opus geminatum" (twinned works) genre, in which two texts are produced, one prose and one verse, on the same topic.¹¹ He received what was the best available education for his time and place, as William of Malmesbury reports that Aldhelm studied in his youth at Canterbury under the Abbot Hadrian from North Africa¹²:

Parens ergo, qui pro conscientia nobilitatis nichil abiectum saperet, non degeneris magistris scholae tradidit filium, primis imbuendum elementis, sed Adriano abbati sancti Augustini, quem in arce scientiae stetisse qui Anglorum Gesta perlegit intelligit. Ibi pusio, Grecis et Latinis eruditus litteris, breui mirandus ipsis enituit magistris.¹³

[Thus, his father, who, for the sake of appearing noble, decided to spare no expense. For his rudimentary education, his parent did not send his son to a school of inferior teachers, but to the Abbot Hadrian of Saint Augustine, who, as one who reads *The Deeds of the English* understands, stood at the summit of knowledge. There the young child was educated in Greek and Latin, and soon distinguished himself as a marvelous student to his teachers.]

At Canterbury, he received an education unlike any other available in England because of the peculiar circumstances that brought Theodore and Hadrian

11 See G. T. Dempsey, *Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Ending of Late Antiquity*. *Studia Traditionis Theologiae*, 16 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015); Lapidge "The Career of Aldhelm" (see note 9), 15–16; Bill Friesen, "The *Opus Geminatum* and Anglo-Saxon Literature," *Neophilologus* 95.1 (2011): 123–44.

12 See Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (see note 1), 329: Bede states that Hadrian was the abbot of the monastery of Hiridanum, a place near Naples, and that he was originally from Africa.

13 William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum: The History of the English Bishops*, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom. Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 502.

there. According to the *Ecclesiastical History*, the intended candidate for the position of Archbishop of Canterbury, a priest named Wigheard, died from the plague as soon as he arrived in Rome. After much deliberation, Pope Vitalian decided to send Theodore of Tarsus and Hadrian, and although they departed together, Hadrian was held back during the journey and arrived in England sometime after Theodore, who was consecrated Archbishop in 668.¹⁴ Because of their diverse backgrounds, Archbishop Theodore and Hadrian were able to bring new texts to Canterbury, and the commentaries imply that they had vast knowledge of Antiochene theologians.¹⁵ It should be noted that Aldhelm may have spent time studying under the Irish Abbot Malidubh.¹⁶ If this was the case, Irish exegesis could have had an influence on the *Enigmata*, but while its potential influences are no doubt important, this paper focuses on Aldhelm's connection to Theodore and Hadrian and the exegetical elements of the riddles in association with their school, as his Letter to the Abbot Hadrian implies that he held a favorable opinion of the educational procedures there.¹⁷ The School would logically have influenced his later work, and in a place where exegesis was held to the highest standard, it would seem appropriate that the linguistic, scientific, and religious aspects Aldhelm brought to the riddle tradition are connected to the similarly situated scholarship produced at Canterbury.

This paper hopes to show that those who actively sought to understand the many layers of meaning within his *Enigmata* would, inevitably, have learned some of the skills that were used in exegesis at the school through play. Aldhelm stressed the need for education, and it is only fitting that the work he produced would have an edifying quality. William of Malmesbury stresses Aldhelm's role as a teacher, noting that he took on numerous pupils who would become monks at a time when Christianity was burgeoning in Anglo-Saxon England.¹⁸

14 Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (see note 1), 328–32.

15 *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian*, ed. Bernhard Bischoff and Michael Lapidge. Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 10 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 205–28 and 243–49.

16 See Barbara Yorke, "Aldhelm's Irish and British Connections," *Aldhelm and Sherborne: Essays to Celebrate the Founding of the Bishopric*, ed. Katherine Barker and Nicholas Brooks (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010), 164–80; G. T. Dempsey, "Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Irish," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, 99C.1 (1999): 1–22; Michael Winterbottom, "Aldhelm's Prose Style and its Origins," *Anglo-Saxon England* 6 (1977): 39–76.

17 *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Rudolf Ehwald. Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 15 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1919), 478; Aldhelm, *The Prose Works*, trans. Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1979), 153–54.

18 William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* (see note 12), 504.

His riddles, then, would rationally serve as more than just a playful escape, but rather an invitation to test and train through a challenge that simulated his own educational gauntlet.

The enigmas cover a wide variety of subjects, such as animals, elements, and natural phenomena. But it should be noted that many of these subjects, even those that are intertwined with classical mythology, are placed within the context of Christianity. Aldhelm borrows much from the late-Latin poet Symphosius (ca. third or fourth century C.E.), whose only known work is his set of 100 *Aenigmata*. Despite their similarities, Aldhelm's riddles are distinctly his own, diverging greatly from his source to inspire a new methodology of play. Where Symphosius might be writing to drunken socialites, playing with words in light-hearted twists and turns, Aldhelm presents his riddles as rigorous tests, requiring his players to draw upon a great wealth of knowledge to understand the full significance of each riddle.¹⁹ Both authors created a set of one-hundred riddles, but Symphosius's are all laconic three-line poems whereas Aldhelm's increase in length, beginning at four-lines (already surpassing Symphosius in complexity), and gradually increasing until reaching the final 83-line riddle, *Enigma* no. c, *Creatura* (creation). The differences between Aldhelm's and Symphosius's riddles can tell us much about the change in focus and the way in which this form of play was repurposed for an educated monastic audience. *Symphosii Aenigmata* no. II, *Harundo* (reed), highlights a few key aspects of his *Aenigmata*:

Dulcis amica dei, semper vicina profundis,
Suave cano Musis, nigro perfusa colore
Nuntia sum linguae digitis signata magistris.²⁰

[Sweet friend of a god, always near deep things, I sing sweetly to the Muses, bathed in black color I am the messenger of the tongue having been signed by the fingers of the master.]

This riddle, like others of Symphosius, is short and relatively easy to understand in terms of syntax; it is not contrived, and it does not deploy an obscure lexicon. Moreover, it evokes pagan imagery, making a reference to the nymph Syrinx and

¹⁹ Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (see note 8), 159; See now Curtis A. Gruenler. *Piers Plowman and the Poetics of Enigma: Riddles, Rhetoric, and Theology* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017). Gruenler includes a comparison of Aldhelm's and Symphosius's riddles. He draws attention to Aldhelm's theological perspective on riddles (100), including the influence of Jerome's translation of Samson's neck-riddle in Vulgate Old Testament (101) and the *Enigmata's* effect on the Exeter Book riddles (106).

²⁰ *The Hundred Riddles of Symphosius: Translated into English Verse with an Introduction and Notes*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth Hickman du Boies (Woodstock, VT: The Elm Tree Press, 1912), 18.

the God Pan.²¹ While Aldhelm does not directly use this riddle, he borrows some elements from it in his own riddle, *Enigma* no. lix, *Penna* (pen):

Me dudum genuit candens onocrotalus albam,
Guttur qui patulo sorbet de gurgite limphas.
Pergo per albentes directo tramite campos
Candentique viae vestigia caerula linquo,
Lucida nigratis fuscans anfractibus arva.
Nec satis est unum per campos pandere callem,
Semita quin potius milleno tramite tendit,
Quae non errantes ad caeli culmina vexit.²²

[Shining, the pelican, who sucks in a whirl pool of pure water into its mouth, once caused me to be white. I hasten, steered along a footpath, on white surfaces and I leave dark-colored traces on the shining path, darkening the bright fields with winding black marks. It is not enough to extend one path through these fields, rather the narrow path proceeds along the trail in one thousand ways. It carries those not who do not stray to the summits of heaven.]

While there are a few key similarities here that suggest influence,²³ Aldhelm's riddles include a religious undertone, stating that writing will lead a reader to heaven. Moreover, he utilizes the symbol of the pelican to invoke the image of Christ, as it was commonly believed that the bird pierced itself to feed its blood to nurture its young, mirroring the sacrifice. His riddles have an underlying Christian component, reflecting the literary culture in which they were created.²⁴ Essentially, these two poets made similar games for different cultures with different purposes, and Aldhelm strove to edify players on subjects important to the monastery. His *Enigmata*, while playful, should therefore be recognized as didactic tools under the guise of play.

²¹ See Dieter Bitterli, *Say What I am Called: The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book and the Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 137.

²² *Aldhelmi Opera* (see note 17), 124.

²³ Bitterli, *Say What I am Called* (see note 21), 139: Bitterli emphasizes the significance that this riddle-element had in later riddles: "With the black ink that flows from the pen and the guiding fingers of the writing hand, Symphosius introduced two of the most persistent motifs of scribal riddling."

²⁴ See *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, trans. Michael Lapidge and James Rosier (1985; Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2009), 63. Michael Lapidge asserts that the riddles are better understood as "mysteries." He writes, "... we can see that Aldhelm intended his *Enigmata* as glimpses – through a gloss darkly, as it were – unto the hidden meaning of things. For this reason we should best render the term *enigmata* as 'mysteries' rather than 'riddles' (a term which perhaps implies the levity which Aldhelm deplored in Symphosius)."

Play might seem a thing of little consequence, as its purpose is to be separated from the rigors of reality for the sake of enjoyment. However, studying forms of play can provide insight into a culture, as it expresses the values innate and important to a group of players. In his work that propelled the study of play, *Homo Ludens*, Johan Huizinga, argued that “In play there is something ‘at play’ which transcends the immediate needs of life and imparts meaning to the action.”²⁵ On the subject of riddles, he discusses the life-or-death stakes of such games in myths of the German, Greek, and Norse traditions.²⁶ While the risks are not quite so high for Aldhelm’s riddles, his statement on these riddle-contests still might stand true in the case of the *Enigmata*:

In principle there is only one answer to every question. It can be found if you know the rules of the game. These are grammatical, poetical, or ritualistic as the case may be. You have to know the secret language of the adepts and be acquainted with the significance of each symbol – wheel, bird, cow, etc. – for the various categories of phenomena.²⁷

The symbols in the *Enigmata* are particularly pertinent to the curriculum in which Aldhelm was schooled, drawing upon both Isidore’s *Etymologiae* and the method of analysis that seems to have been encouraged at Canterbury. In this ancient tradition of riddling, he beckons players to call forth knowledge which he deems significant in the “sacred language” of the monastery, testing them on their virtues as monks. Roger Caillois, who built upon Huizinga’s paradigm, resituated the definition of play presented in *Homo Ludens*. In his exten-

25 Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (1944; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited, 1949), 1.

26 Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (see note 25), 108–09. See *The Old English Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Peter Goolden (London: Oxford University Press, 1958). In the Old English translation of *Apollonius of Tyre*, the king Antiochus offers a riddle challenge for his daughter’s suitors, where he promises his daughter’s hand to the victor, but death to any that fail (4). However, the riddle here is a trap more than a test, as Antiochus uses it to discern if his incestuous encounter with his daughter is widely known. His riddle cryptically asks who has slept with his daughter: “Scylde ic þolige, moddrenum flæsce ic bruce Ic sece minne fæder, mynre moder wer, mines wifes dohtor and ic ne finde” (6; I suffer from a crime, I taste upon the motherly flesh. I seek my father, the husband of my mother, my wife’s daughter, and I do not find them). Apollonius answers the riddle correctly, that Antiochus is the one who committed the crime. Nevertheless, Antiochus claims Apollonius is wrong and gives him thirty days to find a different answer (which will ultimately also be incorrect) or suffer beheading (6). While this narrative riddle-tradition differs in nature from the *Enigmata* of Aldhelm, it shows that there was a cultural awareness of the gravity that riddles could hold, and that certain truths, in this case a dangerous one, could be determined by solving the enigma.

27 Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (see note 25), 110.

sive classifications of games, he would have categorized these riddles as “Agon,” competitive games, which could be physical competitions, like boxing, or mental feats like crossword puzzles. While Caillois does not explicitly place riddles in this category, they follow the criteria in his schema, “in which champions, without directly confronting each other, are involved in ceaseless and diffuse competition.”²⁸ Games in this spectrum are considered social occurrences, and even while the enigmas of Aldhelm may have been read and ruminated on in quiet contemplation, the inclusion of glosses in certain manuscripts, like MS Royal 12.C.xxiii, along with their use in the educational curriculum in the tenth century,²⁹ adduces that they were at least social on some level, as monks worked with the text, unveiling certain troubling passages to perhaps enlighten their peers.

There is no doubt that medieval riddles were didactic in nature and that they taught an abundance of skills. For instance, Alcuin's *Disputatio regalis et nobilissimi iuuenis Pippini cum Albino scholastico*, a dialectic between Alcuin and the young son of Charlemagne, Pippin, presents a series of riddle like questions that are clearly intended to teach the reader vicariously through the dialogue.³⁰ While the *Enigmata* is not as explicit in its edification, the elements are still present, and this work probably played an important role in the curricula of monastic institutions. Most important though, is that this knowledge would have ultimately served as a tool in analyzing and uncovering the mysteries of Scripture, as that was perhaps the most prized facet of monastic scholarship. To stress this point, of all that Bede studied and wrote about, he seems to have valued his studies of Scripture above others. In his bibliographical note at the end of the *Ecclesiastical History*, he writes, “cunctumque ex eo tempus uitae in eiusdem monasterii habitatione peragens, omnem meditandis scripturis operam dedi”³¹ (and spending the rest of my life in the residence of this monastery, I gave all my labors to

28 Roger Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games*, trans. Meyer Barash (1958; Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 17.

29 See Salvador-Bello, *Isidorean Perceptions of Order* (see note 5), 39: Salvador-Bello writes that a medieval catalogue from Glastonbury includes “enigmata multorum” within its entries. See Emily V. Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England*. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 47. Thornbury provides a list of the core curriculum with verse texts, which includes the riddles of both Aldhelm and Symphosius.

30 See Wilhelm Wilmanns, “Disputatio regalis et nobilissimi iuuenis Pippini cum Albino scholastico,” *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum* 14 (1869): 530–55. See Jean Lauland, “The Role of Riddles in Medieval Education,” *Revista Internacional d'Humanitats* 16 (2009): 5–12. Lauland provides an overview of the various lessons that riddles, including those of Alcuin, could teach in the medieval period, covering mathematics, worldly knowledge, and allegorical mentality.

31 Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (see note 1), 566.

the study of Scripture). It would seem that the knowledge imparted by Aldhelm through the *Enigmata* would, at least indirectly, help the reader utilize linguistic analysis, and as will be seen later, many of the skills required in fully understanding the riddles mirror those used in the commentaries at the Canterbury School.³²

Despite this, of all the subjects these *Enigmata* had the potential to teach, Aldhelm stresses the importance of meter in his introduction to the *Epistola ad Acircium*. Placed alongside two treatises on meter (*De metris* and *De pedum regulis*) and a text on the significance of the number seven in the *Epistola*, Aldhelm draws attention to the metrical forms he used to compose his riddles in, encouraging the reader to practice the rules he puts forth in the other texts:

Quamobrem nostrae exercitationis sollicitudo horum exemplis instincta et commentis adinventionum stimulata decies denas (vel vicies) quinas id est centenas enigmatum propositiones componere nitebatur et velut in quodam gimnasio prima ingenioli rudimenta exercitari cupiens, ut venire possit deinceps ad praestantioris operis materiam, sit tamen prius haec mediocria metricae definitionis regulis minime caruerint tripartitamque sillabarum differentiam iuxta perpendicularum scandendi rite servaverint; denique praedicta enigmatum capitula primitus quaternis versiculorum lineis degesta, sequentia vero, iuxto quod se occasio componendarum rerum exhibuit quinis aut senis vel etiam septenis metrorum versibus et eo amplius carminantur, quibus indesinenter secundum poeticae traditionis disciplinam cola vel commata seu pentimemerin et eptimemerin annectere progressis binis aut ternis pedibus procuravi; alioquin dactilici exametri regulae legitima aequitatis lance carentes lubricis sillabarum gressibus vacillarent.³³

[For that reason our solicitude in this exercise, inspired by these examples and urged by their design, took pains to compose ten times ten (or twenty times five), that is, one hundred enigmas, and desiring the first rudiments of meagre intelligence to be exercised as if in a gymnasium, so that one is able to come in turn to a more excellent material of work, if at first they do not lack the ordinary rules of meter by definition and preserve the tripartite differentiation of syllables according to the rule which is to be scanned correctly; and ten chapters of enigmas, as mentioned earlier, at first arranged in four lines of verse, and then following, in relation to what the occasion of subjects which are to be composed reveals, with five or six or even with seven lines of verse and furthermore they are made into verse for this: for these which I have cultivated incessantly, according to the discipline of poetic tradition, to connect cola and commata (or to have administered penthemimeral and hepthemimeral caesurae) with progressions in two or three feet; otherwise the just

³² These riddles may have also taught the hermeneutic style of writing that was popular in Aldhelm's time. See Mercedes Salvador-Bello, "Exeter Book Riddle 90 under a New Light: A School Drill in Hisperic Robes," *Neophilologus* 102 (2018): 107–23. For more on this style of writing, see Michael Lapidge, "The Hermeneutic Style in Tenth-Century Anglo-Latin Literature," *Anglo-Saxon England* 4 (1975): 67–111.

³³ *Aldhelmi Opera* (see note 17), 46.

rules of dactylic hexameter, lacking the scale of equality, might falter on the slippery course of syllables.]

Although Aldhelm's prose might come across as superfluous, he provides some insight into his interest in poetic meter.³⁴ The "tripartite differentiation" refers to the different lengths of syllables that could be scanned, naturally short, naturally long, or long by position. Aldhelm found numbers significant, and probably felt that this grouping of three syllabic qualities held some connection to a greater, religious understanding, connoting the Holy Trinity.³⁵ He also draws attention to the caesura's placement, expressing his anxiety that the distinction might be lost. An especially interesting line here is that on the allegory he creates comparing the composition of the *Enigmata* to his scholarly training, leading him to the composition of greater works. Interestingly, this passage ignores the qualities of his riddles that scholars, both medieval and contemporary, have gravitated towards. There is no mention of Isidore, natural science, or etymology, but manuscript glosses indicate that these riddles were mostly analyzed and read to achieve a greater understanding of these subjects.

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Aldhelm's use of Isidore in the *Enigmata* has been studied and examined in depth by scholars,³⁶ and there is little doubt that the *Etymologiae* served as a major source for the riddles. While Aldhelm states that he included the *Enigmata* in the *Epistola* to showcase meter, the actual play and content of the riddles involves deciphering word meaning and etymological significance. Even if the *Epistola* presented the *Enigmata* as examples of meter, the play aspect of the riddles presents something more multifaceted: it teaches the player to think of a subject in terms of its name, and to achieve a greater understanding of it in its literal, etymological sense. It should be noted that Isidore's practice had little in common with mod-

34 See Winterbottom, "Aldhelm's Prose Style and its Origins" (see note 16). Winterbottom discusses the possible origins of Aldhelm's style, providing evidence that it owes itself more to his Canterbury, rather than Irish, education; for information pertaining to Aldhelm's use of metaphor in this passage, see Carin Ruff, "Desipere in loco: Style, Memory, and the Teachable Moment," *Verbal Encounters: Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Studies for Roberta Frank*, ed. Antonia Harbus and Russell Poole. Toronto Old English Series, 13 (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: Toronto University Press, 2005), 91–103.

35 Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England* (see note 29), 45. Thornbury asserts that poetic meter played an important role in understanding the cosmos. A treatise on the significance of the number seven that is included in the *Epistola* suggests, according to Thornbury, that "... he believed the entire cosmos was organized according to numerical patterns, and that metre provided one window into that rational organization."

36 See note 7.

ern linguistic studies, and the etymology proposed was not always accurate. Nevertheless, his work was considered valuable and meaningful in the Middle Ages. Isidore believed that breaking up a word into smaller parts revealed more about it, and that by learning about these smaller elements, one would better know the nature of the subject. On this, Nicholas Howe writes, “He had no sense of phonological or morphological rules and thus tore words apart to suit his needs. But he taught well that the word could be divided into smaller units as a means of determining its meaning.”³⁷ Nevertheless, the *Etymologiae* served as an important text in the medieval curriculum. Isidore describes meticulously what he considered the importance of etymologies at the beginning of his work in *Etymologiae* I.xxix.2:

Cuius cognitio saepe usum necessarium habet in interpretatione sua. Nam dum videris unde ortum est nomen, citius vim eius intellegis. Omnis enim rei inspectio etymologia cognita planior est.³⁸

[The knowledge of <etymologies> often has indispensable value in interpreting the word. For when you can see where the word originates from, you more quickly understand the power of it. Indeed, the investigation of everything is easier to understand when the etymology is known.]

Isidore argued that the origin of the word implies something about its nature and its force, and that tracing the etymology could unravel a greater mystery behind the word.³⁹ It is felicitous, then, that the commentaries of the Canterbury School utilize this philosophy in exegesis, and that Aldhelm would encourage this form of study through play. Essentially, the riddles provide students with the practice necessary to divine deeper meaning from words themselves.

Nicholas Howe provides a thorough analysis of the Isidorian qualities within the *Enigmata*. He organizes the linguistic riddles into four categories: etymological riddles that draw upon Isidore, riddles that use the etymon of the title word as a clue, riddles that use Greek elements, and riddles that play on alternative

37 Howe, “Aldhelm’s *Enigmata* and Isidorian Etymology” (see note 7), 38.

38 *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi: Etymologiarum Sive Originum Libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, vol. 1 (1911; London: Oxford University Press, 1966), n.p.

39 See Chiara Benati, “Painted Eyes, Magical Sieves and Carved Runes: Charms for Catching and Punishing Thieves in the Medieval and Early Modern Germanic Tradition,” *Magic and Magicians in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Time: The Occult in Pre-Modern Sciences, Medicine, Literature, Religion, and Astrology*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 21 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 149–218. Benati discusses the intricacies of magical charms in Anglo-Saxon and Germanic culture, explicating the power that words were considered to have in the Christian medieval and early modern world.

names.⁴⁰ Perhaps most important for this paper are the first and third sections, as the commentaries place similar emphasis on definitions of the natural world and on Greek etymology. To Howe, the name of the subject and its etymological roots were just as puzzling and important as the riddles themselves.⁴¹ One such example, *Enigma* no. *xlvi*, *Urtica* (nettle), shows us both the methodology that the *Enigmata* were predicated on and, through later glosses, how monks interacted with the text. The gloss is notable because it gives us insight as to how these enigmas were treated almost like commentaries in their play:

Torqueo torquentes, sed nullum torqueo sponte
Laedere nec quemquam volo, ni prius ipse reatum
Contrahat et viridem studeat decerpere caulem.
Fervida mox hominis turgescunt membra nocentis:
Vindico sic noxam stimulisque ulciscor acutis.⁴²

[I torment my tormentors, but willingly torment no one, nor do I wish to hurt anyone, unless someone first commits the crime themselves, and strives to pluck my green stem. Soon the limbs of the guilty person swell with fiery pain: thus I punish and avenge injury with sharp stings.]

Howe compares this to *Symphosii Aenigmata* no. *xliv*, *Caepa* (onion) drawing attention to lines four and five of Aldhelm, which contain linguistic clues that the earlier poet lacks:

Mordeo mordentes, ultro non mordeo quemquam;
Sed sunt mordendum multi mordere parati:
Nemo timet morsum, dentes quia non habeo ullos.⁴³

[I bite my biters, although I voluntarily bite no one; but many preparing to bite are bitten: no one fears my bite at all, because I have no teeth.]

Howe notes that both riddles utilize a similar rhetorical device; Aldhelm plays upon “torqueo” as Symphosius does “mordeo.”⁴⁴ However, Aldhelm does not merely mimic his predecessor. He adds an Isidorian, etymological element to the enigma, stressing his desire to focus on linguistic analysis more so than

⁴⁰ Howe, “Aldhelm’s *Enigmata* and Isidorian Etymology” (see note 7), 40, 45, 47, and 51.

⁴¹ Howe, “Aldhelm’s *Enigmata* and Isidorian Etymology” (see note 7), 37.

⁴² *Aldhelmi Opera* (see note 17), 117.

⁴³ *The Hundred Riddles of Symphosius* (see note 20), 34.

⁴⁴ Howe, “Aldhelm’s *Enigmata* and Isidorian Etymology” (see note 7), 40; see Andy Orchard “Enigma Variations” (see note 7), 296–97: Orchard discusses the continued use of this rhetorical device throughout the Anglo-Saxon riddle tradition.

his predecessor. Here, Aldhelm cleverly makes a pun, utilizing Isidore's etymology of the nettle in *Etymologiae* XVII.ix.44: "Vrtica ex eo vocata quod tactus eius corpus adurat"⁴⁵ (The nettle is called so because its touch burns the body). Howe suggests that the real challenge of the enigma is to equate "fervida tergescunt" (<the limbs> swell with fiery pain) with "adurat" (it burns) and then recognize that the "ur" of "adurat" is what Isidore considers the etymon of "urtica."⁴⁶ This would help the reader establish that the etymon of the word reflected something about its nature. While this might sound overly contrived, glosses in a later manuscript indicate that this may be how monks interacted with the text. As Philip G. Rusche notes, this specific line is glossed in Royal 12.C.xxiii, referencing Isidore's comment on the subject: "Urtica ex eo uocatur quod tactus eius corpus adurat. Est autem igneae omnino naturae et <tactu> perurat et pruriginem facit"⁴⁷ (The nettle is called so because its touch burns the body. Also, it is entirely of a fiery nature, and it burns and causes itching when touched). What is perhaps more relevant here is that glosses indicate that the *Enigmata* did indeed encourage monks to learn the etymologies of words simultaneously with understanding the natural sciences. Moreover, Rusche explains that these commentary glosses "are the most useful for the time of textual criticism that we know was favored at Canterbury, at least in the early period."⁴⁸ The commentaries from Canterbury draw upon Isidore rather frequently, and they show that etymology was indeed an important facet of exegesis at the school.

The commentaries from the Canterbury School are notable in that they represent the Antiochene method of exegesis rather than the Alexandrian, allegorical methodology.⁴⁹ Aldhelm's *Enigmata* could represent aspects of his schooling there, as both the riddles and the commentaries utilize Isidore in a similar manner, and the play culture that emerged from the *Enigmata* could therefore indirectly be rooted in Hadrian and Theodore's curriculum. Aldhelm strived to teach readers to unravel words and discover the natural world in the same manner that the authors of the commentaries engaged with scripture. This infers that Aldhelm's education at the school may have influenced the play-culture that pro-

⁴⁵ *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum Sive Originum Libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, vol. 2 (1911; London: Oxford University Press, 1957), n.p.

⁴⁶ Howe, "Aldhelm's *Enigmata* and Isidorian Etymology" (see note 7), 40.

⁴⁷ Rusche, "Isidore's 'Etymologiae' and the Canterbury Aldhelm Scholia," (see note 5), 439; Nancy Porter Stork, *Through a Gloss Darkly: Aldhelm's Riddles in the British Library MS Royal 12.C.xxiii*. Studies and Texts, 98 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), 156.

⁴⁸ Rusche, "Isidore's 'Etymologiae' and the Canterbury Aldhelm Scholia" (see note 7), 438.

⁴⁹ *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian* (see note 15), 243–49.

liferated from his *Enigmata* to the likes of Tatwine's, Eusebius's, and Alcuin's riddles; the Antiochene methodology that Theodore and Hadrian brought with them was embraced in play. The strongest correspondence between the two sources lies in Isidore's *Etymologiae*, where Aldhelm and the commentaries painstakingly analyze their subjects in light of it. Although the commentaries draw upon a myriad of sources, the presence of Isidore is notable, as many entries utilize material from the *Etymologiae* to explain difficult words or obscure items found in the Bible.

The Antiochene methodology of the commentaries is perhaps their most important aspect for this paper, as the *Enigmata* may have trained its readers to perform this kind of analysis. Mainly, the commentaries followed the Antiochene style of exegesis, while focusing on the Greek language, two aspects that we will see appear in Aldhelm's riddles. The two major schools of exegesis that developed in the fourth century,⁵⁰ Alexandrian and Antiochene, shaped the way theologians interpreted the Bible throughout the medieval period. Perhaps somewhat simplified, Alexandrian exegesis favored allegorical interpretation where Antiochene was a reaction against it, favoring historical, literal interpretation. An example of this sort of allegory can be seen in the way Bede analyzed Scripture in *On the Temple*, where he writes that the Tabernacle and the Temple represent the Church of Christ through allegory.⁵¹ However, it should be noted that Bede did not restrict himself to just allegorical analysis, and he even warns against relying too much on allegorical sense at the cost of historical knowledge.⁵² In fact, it seems that exegetes, whether they favored one style or the other, would often blend them to their own needs. Where Alexandrian exegesis believed that one statement could have multiple meanings and drew upon Greek philosophy in its implementation, Antiochene exegesis sought to understand the literal, historical meaning of the word.

The extant commentaries are few in number, but the information they contain relates much about the methods taught at the Canterbury school. Not all,

⁵⁰ See Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 186; M. L. W. Laistner, "Antiochene Exegesis in Western Europe during the Middle Ages," *The Harvard Theological Review* 40.1 (1947): 19–31; see G. T. Dempsey, "Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Paris Psalter: A Note on the Survival of Antiochene Exegesis," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 38.2 (1987): 368–86 for evidence of the Antiochene methodology in the works of Aldhelm and its transmission to Anglo-Saxon England.

⁵¹ Bede: *On the Temple*, trans. Seán Connolly. Translated Texts for Historians, 21 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), 5.

⁵² Bede: *On Genesis*, trans. Calvin B. Kendall. Translated Texts for Historians, 48 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 69.

but many entries rely heavily upon the *Etymologiae*, intersecting with information found in the *Enigmata*, and indicating a shared interest in etymology. These three approaches have been similarly valued by scholarship; both the commentaries and the *Enigmata* express that an understanding of the natural sciences, etymology, and Greek learning are necessary skills. This implies that Aldhelm's education at Canterbury exhorted him to promote these ideals, and the linguistic bend that remained in the medieval riddle tradition came about from the merging of scholastic ideologies in Canterbury. Essentially, the *Enigmata* and the commentaries stress the importance of these ideals. Presented here are a few examples where the three texts overlap, or at least where the etymological methodology is distinctly present in the commentaries. Entry 295 in the First Commentary on the Pentateuch provides an in-depth explanation on diamonds that closely resembles both Isidore and Aldhelm's discourse on the subject. Although the focus of the entry is on the ephod, a garment worn by priests, the exegete discusses the gems that sometimes accompanied it. The uncharacteristically lengthy note on the diamond directly draws upon information present in the *Etymologiae* and the same information appears in the *Enigmata* as well:

Adamans Indicus lapis parvus et indecorus, ferrugineum habens colorem et splendorem christalli; numquam autem ultra magnitudinem nuclei auellanae repertus. Hic nulli cedit materiae, nec ferro quidem nec igni, nec umquam incalescit; et quantum percutiatur nullo modo in illum aliquod signum percutientis uideri poterit; sed si in sanguine arietis missus fuerit et ibi aliquantum steterit, mollificatur; aliter nequaquam mollificatur.⁵³

[The diamond is a small, unsightly stone from India, having the color of rust and the brightness of crystal. It is never found any size larger than a hazelnut. It gives way to no other material, to neither iron nor fire (it never even grows warm); and however much it is struck, no sign of damage can be seen. But if it is placed in the blood of a ram and remains in it for some time, it softens; otherwise it never softens.]

Much of this passage is copied nearly word for word from *Etymologiae* XVI.xiii.2:

Adamans Indicus lapis parvus et indecorus, ferrugineum habens colorem et splendorem crystalli, numquam autem ultra magnitudinem nuclei Avellani repertus. Hic nulli cedit materiae, nec ferro quidem nec igni, nec umquam incalescit; unde et nomen interpretatione Graeca indomita vis accepit. Sed dum sit invictus ferri ignisque contemptor, hircino rumpitur sanguine recenti et calido maceratus, sicque multis ictibus ferri perfrangitur. Cuius fragmenta sculptores pro gemmis insigniendis perforandisque utuntur.⁵⁴

⁵³ *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian* (see note 15), 354.

⁵⁴ *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum Sive Originum Libri XX* (see note 45), n.p.

[The diamond is a small, unsightly stone from India, having the color of rust and the brightness of crystal. It is never found any size larger than a hazelnut. It gives way to no other material, to neither iron nor fire (it never even grows warm); and whence it receives its name from its meaning in Greek, which means indomitable force. While it is invincible to iron and contemptible to fire, it may be broken when it is soaked in warm and fresh goat's blood, and thus is shattered by many strikes of an iron object. Stonecutters use these fragments for engraving and perforating gems.]

Although Isidore is never mentioned in the text; it is self-evident that the author is drawing upon him as a source. Interestingly, the exegete skips the etymological aspect of the word, and then summarizes the rest of Isidore's entry. While this might seem like the commentator finds etymological information insignificant, another example proves that not to be the case. However, before that is examined, let us compare these examples to Aldhelm's *Enigma* no. ix, *Adamus* (diamond):

En ego non vereor rigidi discrimina ferri
 Flammarum neu torre cremor, sed sanguine capri
 Virtus indomiti mollescit dura rigoris.
 Sic cruor exsuperat, quem ferrea massa pavescit.⁵⁵

[Behold! I do not fear battle with hard iron, nor burn in the heat of flames, but the vigorous excellence of my indomitable strength becomes soft in goat's blood. Thus blood overpowers that which then becomes afraid of an iron mass.]

Aldhelm draws upon the same information here that the commentary and Isidore focus upon: iron and fire cannot harm the diamond, unless it is, as they erroneously believed, soaked in goat's blood. However, Aldhelm places far greater emphasis on etymology here, relying on the reader to understand the paronomasia in the use of "indomiti," clearly drawing upon Isidore's etymological explanation. As in the case of the *Urtica* riddle, a gloss in MS Royal 12.C.xxiii indicates that readers may have been considering Isidore when examining this riddle. In the upper margin, Isidore's entry in the *Etymologiae*, mentioned above is included, and above "indomiti," the glosser writes "<id est> non domiti" (that is, not conquered), indicating that the elements of the word were ruminated upon, and perhaps the glosser was breaking apart the word as per Isidore.⁵⁶ While lacking in etymological information, both the *Enigmata* and the commentaries adhere to Isidore in their description of the diamond.

⁵⁵ Aldhelmi *Opera* (see note 17), 102.

⁵⁶ Stork, *Through a Gloss Darkly* (see note 47), 110.

In other places within the commentaries, etymological analyses are prevalent. Michael Lapidge points to twenty examples of etymological explanations scattered throughout them.⁵⁷ While none of these examples correspond directly with any of Aldhelm's riddles, they still indicate that etymological meaning held significant value in the examples of exegesis found at the school. One example serves as a good representation of the whole: "40 *Lapis onichinus* [II.12]: ideo sic dicitur, dum habet colorem unguis, quia onix dicitur unguis"⁵⁸ (The onyx stone: It is called so because it has the color of a fingernail. Therefore, onyx is called "unguis"). This corresponds with Isidore's etymology of onyx in *Etymologiae* XVI. viii. 3: "Onyx appellata quod habeat in se permixtum candorem in similitudine unguis humanae. Graeci enim unguem ὄνυχᾶ dicunt"⁵⁹ (Onyx is called so because it has a whiteness mixed in it similar to a human fingernail. For the Greeks call the finger nail ὄνυξ). Both texts refer to the color of human fingernails as the etymological source for onyx, emphasizing that the name of the stone represented its coloration. Although there is no riddle in the *Enigmata* on onyx, this indicates that the style of exegesis taught at Canterbury shared with Aldhelm a value for natural science and etymology.

Entry 17 in the First Commentary on the Pentateuch seeks to understand a biblical event through astronomical knowledge, and it draws upon a similar wealth of information as the *Enigmata* in its explanation. This example accentuates the model by which the commentaries drew upon encyclopedic knowledge to explain the phenomenal events of the Bible:

17 *In principio fecit Deus caelum* [I.1]: <id est> firmamentum caelum quem philosophi dicunt aplanem, in quo sunt omnes stellae fixae quasi clauī, nisi .vii. planetae.⁶⁰

[In the beginning, God created the heavens: that is the firmament, the sky which philosophers call *aplanes*, in which all the stars are fixed like nails, except for the seven planets.]

Information on the movement of planetary bodies can be found in Isidore's third book, in which he extensively discusses astrological information. In *Etymologiae* III. lxiii, he provides a similar explanation for the movement of the stars:

⁵⁷ *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian* (see note 15), n. 247.

⁵⁸ *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian* (see note 15), 311.

⁵⁹ *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum Sive Originum Libri XX* (see note 45), n.p.

⁶⁰ *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian* (see note 15), 304.

De stellarvm cvrsv. Sidera aut feruntur, aut moventur. Feruntur, quae caelo fixa sunt et cum caelo volvuntur. Movenur vero quaedam [sicut] planetae, id est erratae, quae cursus suos vagos certa tamen definitione conficiunt.⁶¹

[On the course of the stars: stars are either carried or moved. Those which are fixed in the sky and move with the sky are carried. However, some, such as the planets (that is, wanderers), are moved. Yet they are still fixed within the extent of their boundary.]

Here, Isidore draws the distinction between stars that remain in place and move with the heavens, and those that move on their own within their limits. Although the authors of the biblical commentaries do not necessarily cite Isidore, nor do they copy him directly as they do in the diamond entry, the information here overlaps. It is possible that they are drawing upon another text here, as this understanding of the firmament was common knowledge, but it still emphasizes the scientific methodology the commentaries used to understand the Bible. This is an important facet of the *Enigmata* as well, as it tests readers on their knowledge of this information as in the case of *Enigma* no. xlvihi, *Vertico Poli* (movement of the heavens):

Sic me formavit naturae conditor almus:
Lustro teres tota spatiosis saecula ciclis;
Latas in gremio portans cum pondere terras
Sic maris undantes cumulos et caerula cludo.
Nam nihil in rerum natura tam celer esset,
Quod pedibus pergat, quod pennis aethera tranet,
Accola neu ponti volitans per caerula squamis
Nec rota, per girum quam trudit machina limphae,
Currere sic posset, ni septem sidera tricent.⁶²

[Thus, the benevolent creator of nature made me: rounded, I circle entire worlds in wide rings carrying the earth in my embrace with firmness, I confine the rolling blue sea and sky. For nothing within the nature of things can be as fast as me, nothing which moves with feet, nor travels through the sky with wings, nor lives in the blue sea, speeding about with scales, nor the wheel, which is pushed in circles by the machination of water. Nor is anything that moves able, except for the seven planets that outmaneuver me.]

While explanation in the commentary seeks to divulge this information about the firmament, Aldhelm does so in reverse, challenging his readers to know that the movement of the heavens is fixed in all ways but for the wandering of the seven planets. Moreover, Michael Lapidge translates “tricent” as the retrograde motion of the planets in this case, which is a topic discussed in detail by

⁶¹ Isidori *Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum Sive Originum Libri XX* (see note 38), n.p.

⁶² *Aldhelmi Opera* (see note 17), 118.

both Isidore and Bede.⁶³ Both texts, as stressed earlier, strive to place this knowledge in a biblical context, but while the commentary explains information to the reader, Aldhelm tests the player's wealth of information. One needs to be well versed in the natural sciences in order to understand the answer to the enigma, and the riddle strengthens the player's ability to make such connections through its mode of play.

The commentaries and the *Enigmata* share another commonality in their emphasis on Greek words. In the Second Commentary on the Gospels, there are a number of notes that offer the Latin translation, such as entry twenty-two: "*Arundinem* [XI.7] graece, latine cannam"⁶⁴ (A reed in Greek, *canna* in Latin). Theodore and Hadrian brought with them their knowledge of the Greek language, and its stressed importance appeared in this commentary and in Aldhelm's work. While it is well known that Aldhelm had a penchant for using obscure Latin and Greek hybrid words in his works, the *Enigmata* went a step further and toyed with the reader's ability to understand and dissect such hybrids. As mentioned earlier, Howe argues that Greek elements are a linguistic feature of the *Enigmata*. One such example he provides is that of *Enigma* no. xviii, *Myrmicoleon* (ant-lion):

Dudum compositis ego nomen gesto figuris:
Ut leo, sic formica vocor sermone Pelasgo
Tropica nominibus signans praesagia duplis,
Cum rostris avium nequeam resistere rostro.
Scrutetur sapiens, gemino cur nomine fungar!⁶⁵

[Long ago I carried a name in composite forms: just as I am called a lion, I am also called an ant in Greek, making a premonition from my two names, since I cannot fend off the beaks of birds with my own beak. Let it be scrutinized by a wise person why I have this paired name!]

⁶³ Aldhelm, *The Poetic Works* (see note 24), 251.

⁶⁴ *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian* (see note 15), 400. Editor's note: see now also Christel Meier, "'Fremde Wörter' in geistlicher Lyrik des Mittelalters: *obscuritas* und *revelatio*," wildeckit: *Spielräume literarischer obscuritas im Mittelalter: Zürcher Kolloquium 2016*, ed. Susanne Köbele and Julia Frick. Wolfram-Studien, XXV (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2018), 91–118. She observes the fairly strong use of Greek in religious poetry and in liturgical poetry, which was already apparent in Carolingian times, such as in the *Kyrie*, *Sabaoth* trope, in antiphons, in the poems by Hrabanus Maurus, in the works by John Scotus Eriugena, and then also in the *lingua ignota* developed by the magistra Hildegard of Bingen. For a review of this vol., see Albrecht Classen, in *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, forthcoming.

⁶⁵ *Aldhelmi Opera* (see note 17), 105.

While the clues seem to provide a rather obvious answer to the riddle, Howe suggests that it is beckoning the player to translate from Latin to Greek to uncover the layers of significance involved in etymological meaning.⁶⁶ In this riddle, Aldhelm almost supplies the answer, but tests the reader's ability to translate "formica" into "myrmico."⁶⁷ Accordingly, quite a few of the riddles use this same formula, including *Enigma* no. xxxv *Nycticorax* (night-raven) and *Enigma* no. lx *Monocerus* (unicorn).⁶⁸ These examples indicate that Aldhelm wished to encourage Greek learning in addition to Latin. Perhaps this is due in part because of Isidore's stressed importance of Greek, but also because of Aldhelm's time studying under Hadrian and Theodore.

While the *Enigmata* cover a wide variety of materials that might seem unrelated to religion, the entire work is cemented within a Christian context. Some riddles, like *Enigma* no. lxxxi, *Lucifer* (or the Morning Star),⁶⁹ require the reader to utilize several intellectual approaches that combine biblical and scientific knowledge:

Semper ego clarum praecedo lumine lumen
Signifer et Phoebi, lustrat qui limpidus orbem,
Per caelum gradiens obliquo tramite flector;
Eoas partes amo, dum iubar inde meabit
Finibus Indorum, cernunt qui lumina primi.
O felix olim servata lege Tonantis!
Heu! post haec cecide proterva mente superbus;
Ultio quapropter funestum perculit hostem.
Sex igitur comites mecum super aethera scandunt,
Gnarus quos poterit per biblos pandere lector.⁷⁰

[I always precede the bright light of day with my own light, and as sign-bearer of Phoebus, who illuminates the earth, I am moved along a path, advancing through the sky; I love eastern lands, since my glory traverses from there to the region of India, who first see my light. Oh, I was once happy in servitude to the law of the Thunderer! Alas! I later fell, proud in my audacious judgement; thence righteous vengeance smote this dismal foe. Therefore, my six

⁶⁶ Howe, "Aldhelm's *Enigmata* and Isidorian Etymology" (see note 7), 48.

⁶⁷ See Howe, "Aldhelm's *Enigmata* and Isidorian Etymology" (see note 7), 48–49. Isidore does not refer to an ant-lion as a "myrmicoleon," but a "formicoleon." On this, Howe writes that "Aldhelm seems to have supplied *myrmico*- himself as a means of explaining that the 'Myrmicoleon' is, in its compounded, macaronic name, both creature and trope."

⁶⁸ Howe, "Aldhelm's *Enigmata* and Isidorian Etymology" (see note 7), 49.

⁶⁹ See Kaufmann Kohler, *Heaven and Hell in Comparative Religion with Special Reference to Dante's Divine Comedy* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923). This riddle plays upon Lucifer's double meaning. In Latin, the name referred to Venus, the morning star.

⁷⁰ *Aldhelmi Opera* (see note 17), 134–35.

companions climb above the heavens with me. A well-versed reader might be able to uncover the answer through books.]

This riddle combines elements of religion with the natural sciences, requiring the reader to access a wealth of information to understand the multiple facets of the riddle. The ending line calls for wise readers, challenging them to find the answer through several “biblos,” requiring that they research several sources in their inquiry. In one instance, the player could get the answer through biblical knowledge, knowing that Lucifer falls because of his pride, but that would leave the rest of the riddle unexplored. In order to achieve a complete understanding of the enigma, one has to know about the Morningstar and its planetary companions. Merely knowing the answer through one path leaves the others uncovered, which invites investigative scholarship on the part of the reader, thus enforcing the notion that the sciences and Christianity are interwoven.

Not every riddle requires this degree of knowledge, but the final riddle, *Enigma* no. c, *Creatura* (creation), pieces the riddles together within the context of Christianity, ultimately tying them together into the great mystery of creation itself. Aldhelm references a great multitude of things that exist in the natural world as he knew it. In doing this, he infers that all the topics discussed in his *Enigmata* are part of God’s creation. Moreover, there are elements of the riddle that harken back to the literal style of analysis that the commentaries represent. Aldhelm expresses creation through its lack of measurement and amorphous shape, determining that it is unlike the other subjects of the poem and beyond the scrutinization of scholars.⁷¹ The subject is described as being wider than the earth, but able to be held in a fist (ll. 26–27), and shaped as an orb, but also like spun-silk, and so forth (ll. 57–60).⁷² The riddle goes on to express that its subject is beyond this obtainable knowledge: “Sic mea prudentes superat sapientia sofos” (l. 70; Thus I surpass sages in knowledge).⁷³ At the end of his riddle, he challenges readers to know the answer: “Sciscitor inflatos, fungar quo nomine, sofos” (l. 83; I ask puffed-up sages, tell me my name).⁷⁴ While the answer may be all of creation, the material it encompasses is too great to truly name. The clues of the riddle do not lend themselves to answers, rather they explicate that there is no fully comprehensible solution, and the knowledge required to solve earlier riddles, while no doubt valuable in understanding some aspects of the world, is unable to grasp the true essence of all creation. While

⁷¹ Aldhelmi Opera (see note 17), 148.

⁷² Aldhelm: The Poetic Works (see note 24), 93–94; Aldhelmi Opera (see note 17), 146 and 148.

⁷³ Aldhelmi Opera (see note 17), 148.

⁷⁴ Aldhelmi Opera (see note 17), 149.

linguistic, scientific analysis is encouraged throughout the collection, *Enigmata* no. c expresses the limitations of human intellect. It implies that a complete understanding of the universe requires a level of divine influence that educational discipline cannot provide on its own; knowledge is merely an access point that brings one closer to the greater mystery expressed in this last riddle.⁷⁵ This religious sentiment extends into the Exeter Book riddles of the tenth century. Although some portions of Exeter Riddle no. xl are missing, the riddle maintains enough similarity in content to *Creatura* to indicate that it is indeed a vernacular translation.⁷⁶ While it might simply be that the author of this text was translating well-known material, it shows that this religious quality seeped into the culture. It is clear that the natural sciences remained an important facet of riddling as the tradition continued, and that a remnant of the etymological aspects of the *Enigmata* may have translated into the vernacular as well. For instance, Dieter Bitterli has suggested that Exeter Riddle no. vii maintains some Isidorian remnants:

Hrægl min swigað, þonne ic hrusan trede,
 oppe þa wic buge, oppe wado drefe.
 Hwylum mec ahebbað ofer hæleþa byht
 hyrste mine, ond þeos hea lyft,
 ond mec þonne wide wolcna strengu
 ofer folc byreð. Frætwe mine
 swogað hlude ond swinsiað,
 torhte singað, þonne ic getenge ne beom
 flode ond foldan, ferende gæst.⁷⁷

[My garment is silent when I tread the earth, or turn through the town, or disturb the waters. At times my elegant clothes, alongside a lofty breeze, raise me over a dwelling of men, and then the strength of clouds carries me far over folk. My treasures roar loudly and make a sweet melody; they sing with clarity. When I am touching neither flood nor field, I am a traveling spirit.]

⁷⁵ See Benjamin A. Saltzman, "Vt hkskdx: Early Medieval Cryptography, Textual Error, and Scribal Agency," *Speculum* 93.4 (2018): 975–1009. Within Saltzman's discourse on medieval cryptography, he discusses the insolubility of *Enigmata* no. c and one glossator's attempt to break it down and decipher it in parts.

⁷⁶ For more information on the relationship between the *Enigma* no. c and Exeter Riddle no. xl, see Martin Foy, "The Undoing of the Exeter Book Riddle 47: 'Bookmoth,'" *Transitional States: Cultural Change, Tradition and Memory in Medieval England*, ed. Graham Caie and Michael D. C. Drout. *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 530 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2018), 101–30.

⁷⁷ *The Exeter Book* (see note 4), 184–85.

Bitterli observes the heavy use of onomatopoeia in the riddle noting that the alliterating verbs, “swigað,” “swogað,” “swinsiað,” and “singað” replicate the etymological connection that Isidore makes between “Cygnus” (swan) and “canere” (to sing) to the Old English verbs and “swan” or “swon,” which is that the verbs reveal that the swan can sing.⁷⁸ This implies that there was some understanding of the importance Isidore stressed on etymology. However, here the practice transferred across languages, as the author seemed to have created a vernacular etymology for a vernacular word, translating Isidore’s philosophy into a practice that applies to languages beyond Greek and Latin.⁷⁹

The play elements of the *Enigmata* reveal values that were shared between members of the monastic community, values that Aldhelm cemented in a series of riddles that captured the methodological practices at the Canterbury School. This riddle tradition carried on through the Anglo-Saxon period, even extending to the continent and becoming a widespread phenomenon, and while the focus of the play may have changed between sets of riddles, the word-play element often remained and encouraged readers to understand the natural world. Archbishop Theodore’s and Hadrian’s school introduced a great wealth of new ideas to the budding Christian culture of Anglo-Saxon England, and this form of game-play placed philological analysis at a higher standard than they otherwise may have been held to. In its mode of play, the *Enigmata* perhaps heralds a cultural movement where the methodologies preferred by Theodore of Tarsus and Hadrian blended with those already present in England, expressing the influence the School had on Anglo-Saxon monastic culture.

Here, we see the values instilled at the Canterbury School, where rigorous study in etymology, natural science, and ultimately literal analysis stood at the forefront of exegesis. This form of pleasure was perhaps the pleasure of challenge, and while rigorous in nature, it served as a form of enjoyment that simulated cultural values, as an escape that provided a means to practice important skills that did not hold the same *gravitas* as examining and elucidating sections of the Bible, where an improper conclusion could lead to heresy. Many of the val-

⁷⁸ Bitterli, *Say What I am Called* (see note 21), 46; see Roberta Frank, “The Unbearable Lightness of Being a Philologist,” *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 96.4 (1997): 486–513. Roberta Frank makes a similar point. She writes, “If the riddler’s audience knew the traditional Latin etymology deriving *cygnus* ‘swan’ from *canendo* ‘singing’, the more graceful convergence of *swan* and *swinsian* would have seemed to them to confirm the fitness of their native tongue to discover truths, to be an instrument of prophecy” (493–94).

⁷⁹ For information on play aspects of the Exeter Book riddles and Old English poetry in general, see John D. Niles, *Old English Enigmatic Poems and the Play of the Texts*. *Studies in the Early Middle Ages*, 13 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006).

ues presented in the *Enigmata* carried on throughout the Anglo-Saxon riddle tradition, implying that Aldhelm's contribution both shaped and was shaped by the culture that surrounded it, challenging players to decipher and to solve linguistic problems by using the analytical tools of the monastic curriculum.⁸⁰

80 I would like to thank Albrecht Classen, Jordan Zweck, Martin Foys, Sarah Fairbanks, Sarah Friedman, Jonathan Davis-Secord, Andrew Breeze, and Mercedes Salvador-Bello for their feedback and advice.

Warren Tormey

Understanding Monastic Recreations and Luxury within the Anglo-Saxon Patristic Tradition

The Pelagian positions of the fifth century, actively debated by the post-Roman British aristocracy,¹ were condemned by Saint Augustine of Hippo and later by Bede. Presupposing the strength of human will without the burdens of original sin or the guidance of divine preordination, Pelagian doctrine held that humankind is capable of determining its own path toward salvation according to a pursuit of truth and grace, and aided by free will. Suggesting a more relaxed attitude toward pleasure and recreation in alignment with the aristocratic worldviews of the late Roman world, these beliefs invested humankind with the power to discern the fine line between restorative amusement and soul-damaging overindulgence. Bede's harsh condemnations of Pelagius and his followers, consistent with his dismissive attitudes toward the Britons generally, also accord with his reformist ambitions to align the nascent English Christian Church more fully with continental exegetical and liturgical practices.

Prone to see in the Pelagian Heresies a precursor for the lax habits and practices of clerics in his own age, Bede is quick to condemn these lapses in monastic discipline in similarly severe terms as much as he valorizes those who personify its most ideal embodiment. Expressed in *Ecclesiastical History* and elsewhere, but most notably in his late *Letter to Bishop Egbert*,² Bede offers ambitious visions of reform to save what its aging author sees as a fallen institution, one inclining back toward its aristocratic origins and increasingly at variance with its ethos of austerity and primary missions of ministry and service.

In these documents and elsewhere, Bede decries the culture of feasting, luxury, and profiteering that he deems to have taken over the early eighth-cen-

1 See Henry Meyr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to England* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 32. See also Rosalind Love, "The World of Latin Learning," *The Cambridge Companion to Bede*, ed. Scott DiGregorio (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 44–45.

2 See Bede's *Letter to Egbert*, Archbishop of York, *The Biographical Writings and Letters of Venerable Bede*, trans. J. A. Giles (London: James Bohn, 1845), 138–155, accessible via: <http://elfinspell.com/MedievalMatter/Bede/Giles-MinorHistoricalWorks/Epistle2-ToEgbert.html> (last accessed on Jan. 20, 2019).

tury English Church, envisioning instead a model of monastic practice more fully aligned with the sixth-century *Rule of St. Benedict*, which also overtly disparages recreation and amusement within monastic spaces. Instead, clerics are to locate daily satisfactions and higher ecclesiastical purpose in the maintenance of order, structure, and ritual, and within the spiritually uplifting work of healing, cooking, transcribing, meditating, and articulating praise through verse and music. The fourth chapter of the *Rule* details the “tools of our spiritual craft,” or qualities and attributes that define the duties and expectations of individual monks, including prohibitions on excessive pleasure and laughter, and predispositions toward humility, charity, self-denial, prayer, *lectio divina*, or private reflection on scripture, and *stabilitas loci*, or maintaining a steadfast presence within monastic space.³ Such attitudes invariably informed the writings of the chroniclers writing within the Anglo-Saxon *Saints’ Lives* tradition, who also reflected largely critical, if nuanced, attitudes toward luxury and aristocratic forms of leisure and recreation.

Within the developing network of seventh- and eighth-century English minsters, those increasingly institutional spaces of relative wealth and prosperity, the sons and daughters of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy created a new administrative state which served multiple interests, while also struggling to maintain its own more austere ethos in alignment with Benedictine and Gregorian codes. Complementing other documents, the narratives of the Anglo-Saxon *Saints’ Lives* reflect a paradoxical attitude toward the concepts of leisure and indulgence, an outgrowth and reflection of the aristocratic relations between established nobility and a growing clerical class emerging from a similar background of social privilege, which was sometimes conspicuous and often problematic. The literature of the Anglo Saxon patristic tradition particularly reflects the nuanced relations between the emerging minster and the recently-converted noble house that often controlled its fate, with its depictions of recreation and luxury serving to illuminate this tension.

The alignment of early Anglo-Saxon monasticism with the socially privileged classes from which its clerics emerged from is effectively summarized by Sarah Foot, who writes that “[t]his relationship between aristocracy and monasticism is crucial to our understanding of the nature of the early Anglo-Saxon church, and its role and place in society; if models affecting the first aspiring religious were largely those of familial and noble community, not separate solitary asceticism,

³ See *The Rule of St. Benedict*. Trans. with intro. and notes by Anthony C. Meisel and M. L. del Mastro (New York: Doubleday, 1975). For a more authoritative version with parallel text and notes, see *RB 1980: the Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English with Notes*, ed. Timothy Fry, O.S.B. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1981).

these inevitably shaped communities on the lines to which their members were accustomed ...”⁴ This strong cultural affiliation between the aristocracy and the monastery is further underscored by Barbara Yorke, who explores the reception of the minsters to retiring, withdrawing, or deposed kings, observing that despite the “significant personal sacrifice” that any king might have endured in entering a monastery, “the way of life was not necessarily particularly ascetic nor lacking in many of the luxuries and pastimes of the royal court.”⁵ Further, anthropological evidence such as church excavations reveal a process of overlaying a Christian superstructure upon places and practices of significance to pagan spirituality and social capital. Recent work done by historians and archaeologists including John Blair, Catherine Cubitt, David Rollason, and a field of others⁶ enable a reconsideration of the late seventh- and early eighth-century *Saints’ Lives* narratives within the negotiation of bishopric-minster-aristocracy tensions that defined the conversion era of the Anglo-Saxon church.

These historians collectively explore the fluid character of relations between largely transient kingly powers and the emerging monastic institutions gradually taking root, as chronicled by Bede⁷ and reflected within the *Saints’ Lives* tradition. Displays of wealth and recreation within these narratives – expressed in feasts, alcohol consumption, other leisure activities, and the storytelling patterns themselves – reflect the process by which clerics of aristocratic origins struggled to adapt to the austere mandates required by the monastic ethos. Newly imple-

4 Sarah Foot, “The Role of the Minster in Earlier Anglo-Saxon Society,” *Monasteries and Society in Medieval Britain*: Proceedings of the 1994 Harlaxton Symposium, ed. Benjamin Thompson. Harlaxton Medieval Studies, 6 (Stamford, UK: Paul Watkins, 1999), 57–58.

5 Barbara Yorke, “The Adaptation of the Anglo-Saxon Royal Courts to Christianity,” *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300–1300*, ed. Martin Carver (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2003), 243–58; here 247. In making this observation Yorke cites the work of Peter Wormald, “Bede, ‘Beowulf’ and the Conversion of Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy,” *Bede and Anglo Saxon England*, ed. Robert. T Farrell (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports 46 [1978]), 32–95, here 51. Of particular relevance here is Wormald’s observation that “Englishmen in the Church were evidently listening to the literature of the Ingeld type and patronizing the harpists, whose stock in trade such stories were; they were also leading the same kind of splendid life as we find described in *Beowulf*. They had taken with some enthusiasm to the professions of monk and bishop, but without bothering to abandon traditional patterns of behavior. The prominence of drink is especially notable”

6 See, for example, John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Catherine Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c. 650–850* (London: Leicester University Press, 1995); and David Rollason, “Monasteries and Society in Early Medieval Northumbria,” *Monasteries and Society in Medieval Britain* (see note 4), 59–74.

7 For a useful consideration on the limitations of Bede’s perspective, see Yorke, “Adaptation of the Anglo-Saxon Royal Courts” (see note 5), 244–45.

mented practices of self-regulation and monastic ritual, as described in Benedict's *Rules* and reinforced in *Saints' Lives* narratives, stood in opposition to the displays of leisure, consumption, and recreational habits accessible to the more privileged lay classes even as echoes of this elite secular world filtered into those monastic spaces.

Blair argues that England in the seventh and eighth century saw a profound transformation that accompanied the path to Christianity, with monastic sites figuring vitally in the gradual process toward urbanization. That process was enabled by the formation of minsters upon sites of secular significance, like temporal halls established by an itinerant notability and other sites of pre-Christian ritual importance, around which more permanent and commercially viable towns later developed and prospered. Understanding this "Christianizing" narrative in economic terms, as revealed in details of leisure, consumption, and recreation, helps to situate the *Saints' Lives* genre within it.⁸ Blair describes the close relations between minsters and royalty as part of a "working through" of relations between nobility, monastic, and royal influences, a class-based cross pollination between kingships and minsters founded in common habits of luxury and consumption.⁹ Developing on sites of secular significance and advantageous to commerce, these so-called "minster cities" contrasted with the transient character of noble community experience, and are likewise revealed as early centers of conspicuous consumption. Likewise, patterns of land use, information about food supply and distribution, and migration patterns are also tied to understanding patterns of consumption in seventh- and eighth century England.

In this light, depictions of luxury and leisure in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and the *Saints' Lives* offer hints of the "growing pains" of Anglo-Saxon monastic

⁸ Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (see note 6), 120–24. More recently, Blair updated his positions. Discussing the transformations in landscape and trade facilitated by eighth century minsters, he writes: "Monastic sites probably offered the most comfortable forms of accommodation that had been available in Britain since the Roman occupation; the ever-growing eagerness of kings to take advantage of those comforts would eventually lead to problems, but must have been congenial in the early stages. In the first tentative steps towards mechanisation and industrialisation that would now start to become apparent, minsters led the way. The great Frankish monasteries had already assumed a central role in organisation, production, exchange, and distribution within the northern commercial networks, and English communities followed their example. Kings remained addicted to the recreational woods and uplands that had been the backdrop to their hall complexes, but increasingly their eyes turned the other way, towards the river valleys that connected with the new world of commerce and marketable surpluses." See John Blair, "Landscapes of Power and Wealth," *Building Anglo-Saxon England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 103–38; here 136.

⁹ Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (see note 6), 277–83.

culture insofar as the clerical classes negotiated the habits of consumption expected by their royal founders. Themselves largely products of the same aristocratic cultures, this emerging class of English monastics in the post-conversion era navigated this precarious terrain as they articulated their own distinct identity and social mission,¹⁰ one grounded in ministry, devout reflection, and service, and so at variance with the worldly ambitions of elite secular life. Bede's and, later, Boniface's, complaints¹¹ about displays of monastic luxury and excess speak to the tensions between the aristocratic classes and the clergy from which they were drawn.

The monastic expectation of mandated austerity associated with Benedictine Rule stood at variance with the growing economic power of minsters fueled by their associations with royal families as well as with a powerful and prosperous episcopal administration. His *Letter to Egbert* expresses Bede's reservations about the expectations of aristocratic clerics and his ambitions to implement an ethos of greater austerity and cohesion with Roman liturgical practice and monastic discipline.¹² The *Clofesho Canons* of 747,¹³ thirty-one stipulations articulated in ecclesiastical council to facilitate this greater degree of cohesion, likewise speak to these tensions as church officials sought to impose an unfamiliar ethos of austerity on its growing ranks, themselves accustomed to the aristocratic habits like gaming and horse racing (“in ludis et equorum cursibus”) which merit special mention in Canon 16, and “boisterous arts, that is, poets, harpists, musicians, or clowns” (“ludicrarum artium receptacula, hoc es, poetarum, citharistarum, musicorum, succorum”), which are cited in Canon 20. Other recreations aligned with the aristocracy, like hunting and hawking, are condemned elsewhere.¹⁴ Monastic hospitality was exploited to excess by royalty, as suggested by the reservations shown by Bede and Boniface.¹⁵ The relative novelty of the monastic asceticism implied a need for modified expectations of behaviors

10 Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (see note 6), 76–77.

11 A. W. Haddan, and W. Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*. Vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871), 343–60; here quoted from <https://archive.org/details/councilsecclesia03hadduoft/page/360> (last accessed on Jan. 30, 2019).

12 Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (see note 6), 108–09.

13 Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents* (see note 11), 360–76.

14 Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents* (see note 11), 368 and 369. See also Sarah Foot, “The Role of the Minsters” (see note 4), 34–44; esp. 43 n. 39.

15 See *Letter to Egbert* (see note 2); Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents* (see note 11), 343–60; see also Yorke, “The Adaptation of the Anglo-Saxon Royal Courts” (see note 5), 245–57; and Claire Stancliff, “Kings Who Opted Out,” *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace Hadrill*, ed. Patrick Wormald with Donald Bullough and Roger Collins (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 154–76.

shown by the royal class. The rooted character of the minster contrasted with the more itinerant, rootless character of kings commanding their domains from mobile courts and households and from multiple seats of power. The minster thus emerged as a more permanent site for a king to “support” and “control” potentially troublesome relatives and familial challengers, leading to the establishment of “parallel” royal and monastic cultures.¹⁶

Refigured as a missionary tool and stressing the rigid discipline of Christianity’s most ideal embodiments, the *Saints’ Lives* narratives reflect reserved attitudes toward conspicuous leisure activities that assume new significance as bishops and kings vied for control of their minsters. Authors of Anglo-Saxon *Saint’s Lives*, *Sermons*, and other patristic narratives, all highly stylized and rhetorically structured, are likewise prone to envision monastic discipline and spiritual education as duties cheerfully undertaken, and as alternatives to behaviors judged as luxurious, self-serving, self-indulgent or otherwise condemnatory.¹⁷ The Anglo-Saxon *Saints’ Lives* genre reflects the peculiarities of the patristic tra-

¹⁶ Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (see note 6), 284–90.

¹⁷ See Michael Lapidge, “The Sainly Life in Anglo-Saxon Literature,” *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. Malcom Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 251–72; here 260. Providing the outlines of two main categories of the *Saints’ Lives* within the context of Old English martyrology, Lapidge writes that “[t]here are two broad categories of saint’s life: the *passio* (“passion”) and the *vita* (‘life’). The *passio* was the literary form appropriate for a saint who had been martyred for his/her faith, whereas the *vita* properly pertained to a confessor (that is, a saint whose impeccable service to God constituted a metaphorical, not a real, martyrdom). By *passio* is meant an account in which the saint, usually of noble birth, adopts Christianity in days when the state government is pagan; the saint is brought before a local magistrate or governor and asked to recant his/her Christianity by sacrificing to the gods; the saint refuses to do so, even on the pain of innumerable tortures (normally described in excruciating detail), and is eventually killed, usually by beheading. By *vita* is understood a work which takes the following form: the saint is born of noble stock; his birth is accompanied by miraculous portents; as a youth he excels at learning and reveals that he is destined for saintly activity; he turns from secular to holy life (often forsaking his family) and so proceeds through the various ecclesiastical grades; he reveals his sanctity while still on earth by performing various miracles; eventually he sees his death approaching and, after instructing his disciples or followers, dies calmly; after his death many miracles occur at his tomb. Of course any number of variants is possible within these basic frameworks; but the framework itself is invariable. Accordingly, if a particular saint were deemed to be worthy of particular veneration, a *passio* or *vita* in the accepted form would be required so that it could be read out on the appropriate feast day, either in refectory while the monks or clerics dined in silence, or else during the Night Office on the vigil of the saint’s day, when the *passio* or *vita* would be distributed in separate lections, each lection being punctuated by prayer and psalmody.”

dition detailed most fully in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. Emerging from a pagan past and shaped by centuries of Roman occupation, and then positioned within competing Irish liturgical practices and calendar shaped by St. Aidan and Roman traditions articulated by St. Gregory, and later imagined in terms aligned with the Old Testament,¹⁸ the Anglo-Saxon Christian culture of seventh and eighth century Northumbria was beset by anxieties of influence as it sought to establish its authenticity. To that end, its literature, both sacred and secular, reflected a violent world of competing kingships proceeding in accordance with the development of key monasteries that facilitated a slow processes of conversion and movement toward a fuller alignment with continental Roman Catholicism.

The Anglo-Saxon *Saints' Lives* genre in particular tells us much about the nature of audience expectations and storytelling habits, offering occasional but revealing clues about the monastic practices in seventh and eighth-century Anglo Saxon England and the attitudes toward recreation and leisure activity, sanctioned and transgressive, within Anglo-Saxon monastic spaces.

In spaces where recreations, mirth, and amusements stood at odds with the larger ethos of austerity, contemplation, service, and self-denial, select commentators express how sanctioned activities within the larger monastic structure were regarded with approval while others merited scrutiny and suspicion. A useful example is found in Bede's *Life of Saint Cuthbert*, where his harsh attitudes toward unstructured recreation are expressed even toward the wholesome play of children. Building on the account in the earlier version of Cuthbert's *Life*, penned by an anonymous monk of Lindisfarne, Bede structures his more detailed narrative, recasting the saint's first "call" toward higher monastic pursuits. Transforming an innocent episode from the earlier account in which a tearful cohort urges the young Cuthbert away from childish games and toward his higher calling, Bede recasts that relatively benign episode in harsher, more purposeful, and more judgmental terms. In his version the boisterous young man, prone to overcome all contemporaries and even some elders in wrestling, running, and jumping games until "divine providence" ("diuina dispensation") checks the "exuberance of his childish mind" ("elationem animi puerilis"). Blessed by his precocious awareness of the future saint's holiness, the wailing playmate decries the "waste" of Cuthbert's gifts in most dramatic terms, and with this first caution

¹⁸ See Alan Thacker, "Bede's Ideal of Reform," *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo Saxon Society*, ed. Patrick Wormald with Donald Bullough and Roger Collins (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 142–43.

the he turns away from his youthful games and competitions and toward the more purposeful destiny he is to realize in divine service.¹⁹

Other saints portrayed within this tradition likewise show their precocious inclination toward “fitter” duties of ministry and discipline in terms reflecting a distrust for unstructured play. In his *Life of Saint Guthlac*, Felix celebrates the young monk’s zealous self-instruction in divine discipline and devoted self-teaching of psalms, hymns, canticles, prayers, and other forms of musical praise. Willibald’s *Life of St. Boniface*, composed after the saint’s death in 768, likewise valorizes his precocious spirituality as reflected in his recurring demonstration of healing capacities, evident from a young age, and his overcoming both the worldly temptations offered by his wealthy father and his own habits of overly zealous and passionate study, later channeled into a higher embrace of his missionary destiny while working mostly in Hesse and Frisian lands.

In the anonymous *Life of Ceolfrith* the beginning monk, later to be Abbot at Wearmouth and Jarrow, readily accepts the duties of the monastery baker and later, administrator of monastic structure, performing these services joyfully alongside his more ritualistic priestly duties. Finally, the illiterate shepherd Cædmon, showing himself as a skilled versifier, must still be coaxed out of his habitual reluctance to perform for his fellow rustics. With Godly inspiration he reorients his gifts and rises to the occasion, composing a poem paying tribute to divine creation, an event chronicled late in Book 4 of Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History*.²⁰ So impressive is his gift for composition that Cædmon is then called by the Abbess Hild of Whitby to offer his gift to monastic service, converting divine doctrines into mellifluous verse.²¹ And Bede’s pupil Cuthbert, later Abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow and presumably named after the Saintly Bishop of Lindisfarne (whose life Bede meticulously rewrote), describes the aging chronicler’s last days, spent in joyful reflection and spiritual rhapsodizing with his younger pupils after the fashion of that illiterate shepherd who rendered what are considered to be the first verses in the English language.

19 See *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede’s Prose Life*. Text, translation, and notes by Bertram Colgrave (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 66–67 and 155–59.

20 Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, eds. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1969.

21 Elsewhere in this volume, Alex Ukropen discusses the use of Anglo-Saxon riddles as devices to facilitate the development of critical faculties in young clerics, which sharpened their faculties in scriptural interpretation and other exegetical functions. Collectively, these details imply that that sanctioned wordplay and purposeful exercises in memory development, versification, and interpretation served as proper recreative pursuits.

Meanwhile, if these youthful recreations and rhapsodic predispositions are shown within the *Saints Lives* traditions as best channeled toward and contained within the larger monastic structure, any hints of deviance from that structure are shown to merit scrutiny. In Book 5 of *Ecclesiastical History*, Bede describes an “unworthy” blacksmith prone to drunkenness and given to spending long hours in his smithy, details implying that this brother took to his assigned craft with a suspicious degree of interest that stood at variance with appropriate degrees of monastic labor – that his enthusiasm toward his craft approached the status of self-indulgent recreation. In his reform-minded *Letter to Egbert*, Bishop of York, Bede is similarly severe, articulating a belief in the fallen stature of the English church and reserving special condemnations against well-connected church officials who “have no men of religion or continence near them; but rather such as indulge in laughter and jests, revelings, and drunkenness and other temptations of an idle life, and who rather feed their bodies with carnal food than their minds on the heavenly sacrifice.”²² This culture of indulgence contrasts markedly with the ascetic values Bede was invested in, captured in his frequent remarks in *Ecclesiastical History* about the recreative virtues of prayer and fasting, particularly in alignment with Easter observances.²³

22 See Bede’s *Letter to Egbert* (see note 2). According to Thacker, “Bede’s Ideal” (see note 18), here 133 and 143, “Bede’s fears were given definitive expression in 734,...(when) he criticized certain bishops for setting bad examples, drew attention to pastoral failures in remote places, condemned many monasteries as bogus, and lamented the decline of spiritual standards among the laity” (133). Also, “Bede’s depiction of that period and the great preachers and holy communities which adorned it was designed to recall his degenerate contemporaries to a path of righteousness from which he believed they had seriously erred. It was above all a record of monastic achievement, of an ascetic pastorate which, in contrast to the luxurious and avaricious ecclesiastics condemned in the letter to Egbert, rejected worldly possessions, rich gifts, and ostentatious modes of travel, and was zealous in preaching, converting the pagan, and defeating the heretic. All exhibited to a greater or lesser degree the characteristics most completely presented in the portrait of Cuthbert” (143).

23 See Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (see note 20). Bede’s tendency to valorize the fast over the feast captures one of the central contradictions of monastic recreation. For example, Bede signals notes of unease when describing a feast in reserved terms, as shown in *Ecclesiastical History* Book III, ch. 10. In his *Life of Cuthbert*, ch. 27, feasting and storytelling are also mentioned (see James Campbell, “Secular and Political Contexts,” *Cambridge Companion to Bede* [see note 1], 37). This episode receives no comparable mention in the Anonymous *Life of Cuthbert*. The related practices of prayer and fasting, the more spiritually uplifting alternative to such overindulgence, is described as in Book I, ch. 15; III. 3, 17, 19; IV, 26 – observance of Easter fast was particularly important; Thacker, “Bede’s Ideal” (see note 18), here 132 and 139, writes, “Though Bede undoubtedly believed that the contemplative life was superior to the active, he regarded both as essential to sanctity.” In this way Bede follows the lead expressed in ch. 40–41 of Benedict’s *Rule* in judging abstinence from alcohol as a “spiritual gift” in portraying

Meanwhile, in Felix's *Life of Guthlac*, written "shortly before or shortly after Bede's death" in 734,²⁴ ch. 20 and 21 describe how the youthful saint's rigid temperance angers his fellow monks. However, in ch. 43 of the same work, "erring monks" divert from their assigned duties to enjoy "deep" draughts at nearby widow's table. Confronting them and exposing their backsliding ways, the mature Guthlac shows his prophetic gifts and intuitive habit of recognizing and correcting transgressive behaviors in his fellow clerics. Such sentiments also appear in Clofesho Canons 20 and 21, the former decrying the boisterous habits of "vile conversation, feasting, drunkenness, and extravagant play" ("turpium confabulationum, comessationum, ebrietatum, luxuriantiumque cubilia"), that threaten monastic discipline, and the latter more directly mandating the virtues of abstemiousness within monastic spaces.²⁵ In a space where wine and beer were the often the primary beverages, abstinence from alcohol was considered, according

Cuthbert "as conforming to Benedict's most demanding standards." The *Canons or Penitentials* of Archbishop Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury (602–690), describe proper penance for alcoholic overindulgence, reinforcing this habit as an ongoing challenge within monastic environs. Because of their generally unstructured character the *Penitentials* (also *Penetentia*, or *Iudicia Theodori*) are elusive in their complete form. A partial edition, translated into modern English, is accessible via <https://my.tlu.edu/ICS/icsfs/TheodorePenitential3pg.pdf?target=4a32e042-3333-4225-9f50-ab82c626c43d>. The website *The Anglo-Saxon Penitentials: A Cultural Database* offers a more detailed and organized resource, from which *Penitentials* can be accessed in Anglo-Saxon via <http://www.anglo-saxon.net/penance/index.php?p=char5cth> (both last accessed Jan. 20, 2019). Warnings against the abuse of alcohol are ubiquitous throughout the Middle Ages and the early modern age; see the contribution to this volume by Albrecht Classen.

24 See Peter Hunter Blair, *The World of Bede* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 280. No reference or indication of Felix's *Life of Guthlac* is made in *Ecclesiastical History*, suggesting a roughly contemporary composition date of 730–740 and hinting at comparable expectations by the audiences of both works. In commenting specifically about the distance between contemporary and current readers of *Ecclesiastical History*, N. J. Higham, (*Re-)Reading Bede: The Ecclesiastical History in Context* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 40–41, 48, and 59, offers valuable assessments about the *Saints' Lives* genre as a whole. Noting that Bede "did not write for a distant posterity" (40) and citing the extraordinary "mismatch between Bede and his modern audience" (45), Hingham writes that "[o]ur fundamental divergences" from his world are prone to distract us from the "messages about relationships between man and God which he was attempting to propagate" (41). Higham therefore cautions us that "Bede is best read at arm's length and not as if a fellow citizen of any particular community, real or imagined, to which we may suppose ourselves to belong" (48). Even so, Bede's most recognizable work is best understood as "a large-scale intervention in an ongoing contest for power within the Northumbrian Church, which originated in a rancorous competition between Wilfrid and his political opponents in the 680's but now centered on the struggle for control of York as the recovery of its metropolitan status gradually became a reality" (59).

25 Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents* (see note 11), 369.

to Benedict's *Rule*, a "spiritual gift," with penances for drunkenness also appearing in the *Penetential* of Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury.²⁶ These accounts of alcohol-fueled immoderation suggest that it remained a constant temptation both within and outside the monastery, a sin of immoderation turning the stray cleric away from proper discipline. They also imply the comparative wealth of monastic institutions, which maintained clear if tenuous material prosperity in their shared aristocratic interdependence with the royal classes.²⁷

In proper proportion, however, other activities both practical and spiritual were encouraged when seen to conjoin fit service and space for recreation within the discipline of monastic structure. Moreover, these activities are sanctioned as offering a means toward some metaphoric version of salvation, and in these examples we discern other hints of monastic recreation. The *Hortus Conclusus*, or enclosed garden, a feature in the Swiss monastery of St. Gall, suggests that gardening within a common space in warmer climates enabled individual monks to practice the virtues of care, cultivation, and patience, as shown in the "Little Garden" poems of the mid-ninth century cleric Walahfrid Strabo. However, despite the abundant evidence suggesting some form of medicinal gardening as reflected in the Old English *Herbarium* and in Bald's *Leechbook*, this activity receives scant mention in Anglo-Saxon patristic contexts,²⁸ suggesting perhaps the limitations of such activity within the harsher Northumbrian climate.

²⁶ See the *Canons* or *Penitentials* of Archbishop Theodore of Tarsus (see note 23).

²⁷ Benedict Biscop, the founder of Wearmouth and Jarrow, and his successor Ceolfrith, both presumably descended from the same royal lineage as their kingly counterparts, used their wealth in the service of their monastery, acquiring noteworthy collections of books and other artwork to be used in what became a Northumbrian center of learning and culture in the late seventh and early eighth centuries.

²⁸ Chapter 42 of King Alfred's Translation of St. Gregory's *Pastoral Care* offers an exception, mentioning the fragrant herbs mint, dill, and cumin within a larger homiletic context:

"Ðaet is ðeet ilce ðæt eft wæs getaeled ðurh ðone muð ðære Soðfaestnesse, ðaet is Crist, he cwæð: Ge tiogoðiað eowre mintan & eowerne dile & eowenie kymen, & lætað untiegoðað ðætte diorwyrðre is eowre oðra æhta, & ða bebodu ðe giet maran sint on ðære æwe ge no ne healdað: ðæt is ryht dom & mildheortnes & treowa. Nis lis nawht reccelcaslice to gehiranne ðætte he nemde ða undiorestan wyrta ðe on wyrttunum weaxe, & ðeah swiðe welstincenda. Ðurh ðone stenc sint getacnode ða liceteras, ðe willað habban ðonc hlisan haligdomes, & don ðeah lytel godes; & ðeah hi for micel god nc don, hi wilniað ðæt hi micel ðyncen, & hi mon widhcrge."

(Translation: "That is the same which was again blamed through the mouth of Truth, that is Christ; he said: 'Ye tithe your mint and dill and cumin, and leave untithed what is more precious than your other possessions, and the commandments which are still greater in the law ye do not observe: that is, justice and mercy and faith.' We must not hear without attention how he mentioned the least valuable plants that grow in gardens, and yet very fragrant. By the fragrance are

Even so, healing miracles are commonly depicted throughout the *Saints' Lives*, highlighting the extreme holiness of their subjects and therefore underscoring their value to monastic audiences. A great fan of healing accounts, Bede includes them at strategic places in his *Ecclesiastical History*, validating them as he was able as matters of historical fact as supported with witness testimonies.²⁹ These miracle narratives, the “visible manifestation of sanctity” serve a pastoral purpose to edify and model appropriate monastic behavior and show the enduring appeal of wonder for a monastic audience that “expected them from their heroes.”³⁰ For instance, in Book III a wooden cross erected by the newly converted King Oswald is said to provide additional power in warding off barbarian attackers, and it heals the injured arm of one of his soldiers.

The site of this Christian king's death becomes associated with miraculous healing, curing a traveler's horse and a young girl afflicted with palsy. In his prose *Life of St. Cuthbert*, Bede reshapes and enhances accounts in the earlier anonymous biography of the Lindisfarne Abbott, where we see a field of miracles recounted, most of which involve the restoration of health to afflicted persons through Cuthbert's timely agency. Bede also highlights the striking devotion of the young monk as revealed in his intuitive medical skills, which facilitate

signified hypocrites, who aspire to the reputation of sanctity, and yet do little good; and although they do not do too much good, they desire great reputation, and to be praised far and wide.”) King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care, With an English Translation, the Latin Text, Notes, and an Introduction. Edited by Henry Sweet, Esq. London: Early English Text Society, 1871 (<https://books.google.de/books?id=Y3lMAAAAcAAJ>; last accessed on Jan. 20, 2019).

29 For a discussion of Bede's conception of history, See Higham, *(Re-)Reading Bede* (see note 24), 81: “For Bede, therefore, part of the function of history as a genre was the setting down of traditions and stories in the present to which he had referred in his opening lines. While he was conscious of the desirability that such stories be factual rather than purely fictional, their value lay as much in terms of this pastoral utility as in any specific historical reality, which he presumably recognized to be ultimately untestable. Bede was probably aware that a great deal of what he had managed to collect was neither more nor less than opinion formed and passed on within monastic or clerical circles in order to construct particular pasts which were ever evolving, as appropriate to their respective presents. Bede's self-appointed task was to systematize and convey such material on to his own audience, but marshalled, developed and interpreted in such a way as to provide an edifying experience for the reader or hearer in the present. Such stories would not be excluded simply because there was no reliable witness able to verify them.”

30 See Michelle P. Brown, “Bede's Life in Context,” *Cambridge Companion to Bede* (see note 1), 5. Foot, “The Role of the Minsters” (see note 4), 58, cites the “tendency” of monastic literature “to ‘dwell on extreme models of perfection’ as it adapted to the expectations and habits of Anglo-Saxon aristocracy.”

self-healing, and his ability to mitigate harsh weather conditions through the power of prayer. Later, Bede provides detailed accounts which explain Cuthbert's noteworthy ability to banish devils from his immediate vicinity. Presented as authentic fact but rooted in a sense of wonder that seems central to Anglo-Saxon spirituality,³¹ these miracle stories reaffirm the virtues of faith and reinscribe the tents of monastic experience and also offer hints to Bede's call for further ecclesiastical reforms.³²

In recasting the anonymous *Life of Cuthbert*, Bede's portrayals of miracles sought not only to highlight the saintliness of his subject, but also to align Northumbrian monasticism more fully with the virtues and structure of Benedictine rule and Roman liturgical practice. St. Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, written during his papacy (590–604), is identified as Bede's primary model in his effort to sanctify Cuthbert, such that he developed his subject as “an English exemplar of the ideal cleric as both represented and advocated by St. Gregory,” who with Augustine served as suitable “imitators of the lives of the apostles, ‘constantly engaged in prayers, in vigils, and fasts,’ preaching to the English and living the faith even in expectation of martyrdom (I. 26).”³³ Influential to the Anglo-Saxon patristics

31 According to Higham, *(Re-)Reading Bede* (see note 24), here 78 and 79, Bede's “entire practice of naming witnesses, to miracle stories in particular, arguably owes much to his sharing with Gregory the need to substantiate such stories by reference to the stature as truth-tellers of his informants.” Likewise, Bede “was keen to stress that the reliability of his material rested quite explicitly in the venerability of these individuals or groups as witnesses, rather than just himself as sole author.”

32 Captured in what scholars recognize as a reformist agenda central to Bede's purpose in *Ecclesiastical History* (see note 22), this call is more directly expressed in Bede's *Letter to Egbert*, (see note 2), which is built around a vision of monastic discipline that needs additional cohesion with Roman liturgical and monastic practices.

33 Higham, *(Re-)Reading Bede* (see note 24), 54 and 55, also notes that “[a]t the core of Bede's model of a new society lay a muscular form of monastic Christianity, which would be capable of providing the teaching within a contemplative environment necessary to develop a well-educated, right-minded and motivated pastorate, whose role would be not just to preach but also to practise a Christian life, so teach by example.” Further, Higham cites the Council of Clofesho, in 747, as a comparable reformist moment. Modeled after apostolic examples, such reforms would include an assessment of proper monastic behaviors: “As Bede set out in his Preface, he intended to provide a gallery of local case studies of both good and bad behavior for purposes of present, moral edification, and these can easily be construed in terms of his advocacy of a particular type of Christianity, and a particular relationship between Man and God, with very real meaning for his contemporary audience.” See also: Scott DeGregorio, “Monasticism and Reform in Book IV of Bede's ‘Ecclesiastical History of the English People,’” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 61.4 (Oct. 2010), 673–87; here 680, where the author examines how Bede's many examples of devotion and discipline serve as “something more than quaint reflections on a former golden age.”

who modeled their own works after his, Gregory's works shaped the values and expectations of monastic audiences of Anglo-Saxon patristic literature, also forming a proper "starting point" for Bede's teleological narrative chronicling the path of the English toward their expected salvation.³⁴ Complimentary accounts in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and in the *Life of Wilfrid* by Eddius Stephanus, or Stephen of Ripon, describe the contentious saint's involvement with the controversies addressed in Council of Whitby, in 664 C.E. and emphasize the key role served by this itinerant and controversial bishop, who elevated Roman monastic practices above the entrenched Irish versions implemented by St. Aidan. Likewise underscoring the alignment between the English and Roman churches, Stephen's accounts of Wilfrid's pilgrimages to Rome also serve as precursor to later forms of travel literature, implying the entertainment value that monastic readers and audiences would find in historical accounts and travel narratives.³⁵

More importantly, the *Saints' Lives* narratives also capture the bifurcated character of Anglo-Saxon hagiography by aligning the warlike habits of the secular aristocracy with magical tales of Christian heroism. Under the guise of modeling proper and heroic Christian behavior, these accounts reveal a peculiar form of religious entertainment: a thinly veiled fascination with transgressive spaces which is revealed in and enhances the heroic stature of the warrior-saint triumphing over demonic adversaries. Representing another context to understand the tension and mediation between monastic and aristocratic world views, these accounts are first rooted in *The Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great*, written in 594, and offer clues about the imaginative expectations of a patristic audience only a

34 Thacker, "Bede's Ideal" (see note 18), here 143 amplifies this point, writing that: "Gregory and the Roman missionaries form an obvious starting point. The pope's own career is summed up in a chapter of great prominence – at the beginning of Book II, inaugurating Bede's account of the golden age. Gregory's monastic vocation is described at length. He was a true ascetic and *doctor*, able to pass in contemplation beyond the barriers of the flesh and to unfold the mysteries of a book as difficult as Job. Yet at the same time he gave priority to his pastoral responsibilities. He would have become a preacher himself and come to England, but the Romans would not allow it and when pope he was obliged to content himself with sending missionaries in his stead. Bede was anxious to stress that this union of the active and contemplative lives was successful. Gregory's own admission that his pastoral responsibilities interfered with his contemplative life was dismissed, as springing from humility: 'we need not believe that he lost any of his monastic perfection by reason of his pastoral cares.'"

35 See *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*: Text, Translation, and Notes by Bertram Colgrave. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927; 1985), especially ch. III–VI and XXIV–XXXIII.

few generations removed from the ethos of a warrior aristocracy.³⁶ In Book 4, Gregory envisions the afterlife for faithful souls and enables readers to grasp the late sixth-century notion of hell as a fiery and forbidden subterranean space patterned after the imagery of *catabasis* or the traditional underworld journey as depicted in Homeric and Virgilian epic.³⁷ This concept continues to serve

36 See *St. Gregory the Great: Dialogues*, ed. Odo St. John Zimmermann, O.S.B. (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2002). Bede invokes the example of Gregory in his *Letter to Bishop Egbert* (see note 2), and his reliance on Gregory is evident in the echoes of the *Dialogues* throughout the corpus of his work: Thacker, “Bede’s Ideal” (see note 18), 135–36, writes, “Bede, then, was thoroughly conversant with the whole range of Gregory’s writings and must have appreciated the relationship between his commentaries and his hagiography. That relationship provided him with a model (if one were needed) for his own approach to history and saint’s lives. Certainly, in the preface to the *Ecclesiastical History* he alluded to his sources in phrases borrowed from the *Dialogues*, a clear acknowledgment that the later were in his mind when he was working on his masterpiece.”

37 See *St. Gregory the Great: Dialogues* (see note 36), 229–41 and 254–56. Following a discussion of how sinful souls bear eternal torment in celestial hellfire (as modeled after the underworld imagery of classical epic), Gregory cites the demise of King Theodoric as one such example. He then relates to his fellow interlocutor, his deacon Peter, the story of one Repartus, “a prominent man” (229), whose momentary death provides occasion for a journey into the otherworld for the purpose of teaching us “that we should use the opportunities given to us to correct our evil ways” (229). The fires of hell, as reported by Repartus, are described in the form of a giant funeral pyre, and Gregory interprets this image to mean not that “wood is burned in hell,” but rather “to give...a vivid picture of the fires of hell, so that, in describing them to the people, they might learn to fear the eternal fire through their experience with natural fire” (230). Gregory then describes the simultaneous deaths of two individuals, Eumorphius and Stephen, whose deaths are described as a journey on a ship from Rome to Sicily. Gregory interprets the image in this fashion, explaining “[t]hat he should sail to Sicily is best explained by recalling that in the islands around Sicily there are more open pits burning with fires from hell than in any other region” (235), offering this lurid observation to equate the state of spiritual torment with corporal forms. Ultimately, the image of fire serves St. Gregory to reinforce the precariousness of God’s good graces, explaining that “In His unbounded mercy, the Good God allows some souls to return to their bodies shortly after death, so that the sight of hell might at last teach them to fear the eternal punishments in which words alone could not make them believe” (237). Gregory’s vision of the otherworld contains a rich assortment of images, including beautiful dwellings made of bricks of gold, which are contrasted with noxious streams of evil-smelling vapors lying across a bridge (241). He cites *Genesis* 19:24, or the story of God’s destruction of Sodom, as the source for these punishments for overindulgence in carnal pleasures. Of obvious value to the moral dimensions of Gregory’s account, these passages also express something about what a clerical audience might find entertaining. Seemingly delighting in this account in which fiery domains serve as a place for the purification of souls, Gregory maintains that “there is one kind of fire in hell, but it does not torment all sinners in the same way, for each one feels its torments according to his degree of guilt” (254). Additionally, however, he follows the mandate expressed in Matthew 25:46 on the permanence of eternal torment for those judged

as a key image within the seventh century *Saints' Lives*, representing an intermediate place between the corporeal and spiritual realms, also mediating between the violent worlds of aristocratic warfare and the contemplative and charitable expectations of monastic discipline.³⁸ Likewise commenting on the trope of fire, Stephen of Ripon (Eddius Stephanus) describes its recurrence in Wilfrid's *Life* to reinforce his saintly character, observing that "we frequently read that the Holy Spirit has appeared in the form of fire, for God is a fire consuming sinners and enlightening the righteous" ("frequenter legimus spiritum sanctum in igne apparuisse, quia *Deus ignis est, consumens peccatores et illuminans iustos*").³⁹

As shown in this example, Gregory's accounts establish a basis by which the *Saints' Lives* chroniclers are able to syncretize the traditions of Germanic heroism with a vision Christianity heavy on warfare, combat, bloodshed, and sacrifice, enabling a version of the genre suitable to Anglo-Saxon monasticism while simultaneously echoing more violent, aristocratic warrior ethos modeled in *Beowulf* and *The Dream of the Rood*. Beyond their value as saintly spectacle, these violent and graphic accounts of demonic encounters within the Anglo-Saxon *Saints' Lives* underscore the lineage between that aristocratic class, united and defined by warfare and self-preservation, and an emerging clerical ethos which affirms its legitimacy by mirroring that violence in encounters with horrif-

to be condemned: "Just as the joys of heaven will never cease, so, too, there is no end to the torments of the damned" (254). God's rationale, Gregory explains, is to extract from the sinner a just punishment for sins committed in this world and use the example of the sinner for the benefit of the saved: "being a God of love, [He] does not gratify His anger by torturing wretched sinners. However, since He is a god of justice, the punishment of the wicked cannot satisfy Him even if it continues eternally. All the wicked condemned to hell are being punished for their wickedness ...Yet there is another reason why they burn, namely, that the elect may see in God all the joys they experience, and may see in the damned all the tortures they escaped. Seeing the terrible punishment for sin which they avoided with God's help, they become all the more conscious of the eternal debt of gratitude they owe God for the Graces they received" (256).

38 Peter Hunter Blair (see note 24), 128–29, contends that English monasteries from the seventh- and early eighth-centuries would have access to, as well as a strong interest in transmitting, the corpus of Gregory's works, particularly his *Homilies*, his *Pastoral Care*, and his *Morals*. "There would certainly be copies of all these works," Blair notes, "in the libraries at Wearmouth and Jarrow," where they would be accessible to Bede. Further, Blair writes that "[w]e are not likely to be mistaken in thinking that the major works of Gregory the Great were more frequently copied in Anglo-Saxon scriptoria in the age of Bede than those of any other writer (*World of Bede* 295). Colgrave and Mynors, translators and editors of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (see note 20), here 128–29, observe that one may regard Gregory's *Dialogues* "as the chief Western source of those visions of heaven, hell, and purgatory which formed an important genre in medieval literature and reached its highest point in Dante's *Divine Comedy*."

39 See *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus* (see note 35), 4–5.

ic and grotesque demonic forces. These accounts, patterned after the epic traditions of *catabasis* and strategically placed within the structure of the narrative, serve that important mediating function to conjoin the two worlds in conceptual terms, framing the ethos of violence as essential components that unite the cross and the crown within a mutually shared aristocratic ethos.

Felix's *Life of St. Guthlac*, a contemporary complement to Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, captures more directly the violent spirituality that linked the specter of violence within the secular world with the self-denying asceticism of the spiritual world and defined the life of the seventh and early eighth century warrior-saint in spiritual warfare with demonic forces. Said to be born in 674, the martyred Saint fought against the Britons on the Welsh border near Offa's dyke. Emerging from this violent pagan background of Mercian nobility to enter the monastic life, he entered his hermitage at the remote island of Crowland,⁴⁰ a Roman barrow on the eastern fens, making his home on a site where others had hoped to find buried treasures. In this place he becomes a Christian warrior, enduring Satan's temptations and waging war "against the foul forces of darkness" ("adversus teterrimi hostis insidias"), armed with "the shield of faith, the breastplate of hope, the helmet of chastity, the bow of patience, and the arrows of psalmody" ("scutum fidei, lorica spei, galeam castitatis, arcum patientiae, sagittas psalmodiae").⁴¹

It has been established that the cleric Felix also knew the works of Gregory the Great, and was familiar with at least some of Bede's writings (particularly his

40 See *Felix's Life of St. Guthlac: Text, Translation, and Notes* by Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956, 1985), 7. While in retreat Guthlac also becomes a confidant of the future Mercian king Aethelbald before dying suddenly while in prayer in the year 716. He later appears to the king and offers a vision of the latter's ascension to the kingship, which takes place in the same year. *The Life of Guthlac* is connected to this foundation of the monastery of Crowland, founded by Æthelbald, and the development of that monastery, originally his hermitage, is illuminated when situated within the larger currents of eighth century Merican political tensions. Æthelbald, a rival to Mercian King Ceolred, visited Guthlac for support and advice, and the saint's visionary habits confirm his semi-divine standing. Detailed in the *Life of Guthlac* (ca. 749), this dynamic situates the Æthelbald – Guthlac friendship within the political tensions associated with the Mercian kingship, orienting events toward the favor of the aspiring king, and thereby underscoring the character of associations between royal and monastic power. To this end, editor Bartram Colgrave observes that "It is no wonder that the king should have honored the holy man with whom he had so often taken refuge and from whom he had received much encouragement. Nor is it surprising that Felix should speak so highly of him."

41 These lines are modeled on the "armor of God" motif articulated in Ephesians 6:11–17. The "Scutum Fidei," or the allegorical "Shield of the Trinity" model captures the multifaceted faith of the Christian warrior in battle against the devil. See Bertram Colgrave, *Felix's Life of Guthlac* (see note 40), 90–91.

Life of St. Guthbert, which he patterned his own work after), and was fully familiar with the *Aeneid*.⁴² After this fashion Guthlac's underworld journey is described in rich and lurid terms, underscoring also the entertainment value evident in the horrific demonic grotesquerie. Sitting alone in his retreat, Guthlac keeps his nightly vigil of prayer and fasting when he is suddenly besieged by a troop of or "foul spirits" ("inmundorum spirituum"). Bursting forth from earth and sky alike, these spirits, "ferocious in appearance," and "terrible in shape" ("aspectu truces, forma terribiles"), showed a full catalogue of grotesque features, including:

capitibus magnis, colles longis, macilenta facie, lurido vultu, squalida barba, auribus hispidis, fronte torva, trucibus oculis, ore foetido, dentibus equineis, gutture flammivomo, faucibus tortis, labor lato, vocibus horronis, comis obustis, buccula crassa, pectore arduo, femoribus scabris, genibus nodatis, cruribus uncis, talo tumido, plantis aversis, ore patulo, clamoribus raucisonis.

[great heads, long necks, thin faces, yellow complexions, filthy beards, shaggy ears, wild foreheads, fierce eyes, foul mouths, horses' teeth, throats vomiting flames, twisted jaws, thick lips, strident voices, singed hair, fat cheeks, pigeon breasts, scabby thighs, knotty knees, crooked legs, swollen ankles, splay feet, spreading mouths, raucous cries.]⁴³

These unpleasant spirits attack the genuflecting hermit, wresting him from his house and dragging him about the swampy environs of his fenland hermitage. Guthlac remains unmoved, his faith steadfast despite the pain they inflict with "whips of iron" ("flagellorum ferreorum"). Dragging him then to the uppermost reaches of the gloomy and freezing skies, they carry Guthlac "to the accursed jaws of hell" ("ad nefans tartari fauces"). Again employing many features of traditional *catabasis*, Felix seemingly revels in its horror and spares no detail in his account of the vision of the suffering, steadfast, and ultimately triumphant saint whose heroic destiny is, like that of Virgil's *Aeneas*, confirmed by these superhuman exploits.⁴⁴ The distinctive features of the author's description of Guthlac's

⁴² See Bertram Colgrave, *Felix's Life of Guthlac* (see note 40), 17.

⁴³ See Bertram Colgrave, *Felix's Life of St. Guthlac* (see note 40), 103.

⁴⁴ The horrific account continues, sparing few details in describing the fiery abyss traversed by the heroic and noble warrior-saint: "For not only could one see there the fiery abyss swelling with surging flames, but even the sulphurous eddies of flame mixed with icy hail seemed almost to touch the stars with drops of spray; and evil spirits running about amid the black caverns and gloomy abysses tortured the souls of the wicked, victims of a wretched fate, with various kinds of torments." ("Non solum enim fluctuantium flammarum ignivomos gurgites illic turgescere cerneret, immo etiam sulphurei galeali grandine mixti vortices, globosis sparginibus sidera paene tagentes videbantur, maligni ergo spiritus inter favillantium voraginum atras cavernas discurrentes, miserabili fatu animas impiorum diversis cruciatuum generibus torquebant.")

otherworldly sojourn – the flames, the sulphurous eddies, the wretched sinners tortured and tossed about, the extremes of ice and fire – easily connect with Bede's account in *The Life of Saint Cuthbert*, which Felix was clearly familiar with and which he “uses very considerably,” and also contain echoes of his account of Drythelm's vision in *Ecclesiastical History*. All underscore the appeal of a well-crafted demonic scene to enchant monastic audiences,⁴⁵ conjoining classical, Germanic, and scriptural motifs with scenes of violence and lurid demonic detail to align with the imaginative expectations of Anglo-Saxon clerics still familiar with, and perhaps seeking to see their monastic experience in comparable terms with, the heroic exploits and indulgences of their secular counterparts.

Recognizing how the *Saints' Lives* genre sought to meditate the tensions emerging from the shared origins that produced both clerics and princes, this essay has sought also to glean hints of recreation rooted in the aristocratic tastes and recreational habits that were also known to the clerical class and expressed in Anglo-Saxon patristic tradition, and more importantly, has sought to explore the tensions within that tradition toward recreation and amusement. To conclude I invoke a single representative post-Conquest work, to offer a snapshot of a later time, when the church's prosperity and connection to aristocratic

Just as the underworld sojourners in both the classical and Christian traditions are rescued by godly intermediaries just as their perils become most paramount, so is Guthlac wrested from his demonic captors and returned to his earthly realm. As he faces the “yawning mouths” (“patulis hiatibus”) of the “fiery entrances of Erebus” (“igniflua Herebi hostia”), the demons pointing him toward the “the bowles of Styx” (“fibrae Stigiae”) and the “the gulfs of Acheron” (“aestivi Acherontis”), Guthlac remains defiant toward the demons, those “sons of darkness, seed of Cain, who are but dust and ashes” (“filii tenebrarum, semen Cain, favilla cineris”). Then, with “with outpoured radiance” (“aethereis sedibus”), St. Bartholomew appears “with golden brilliance” (“aureo fulgore”) from “Glorious Olympus” (“radiantis Olimpi”) with his heavenly charges to ward off Guthlac's captors. His minions bear Guthlac on their wings back to his hermitage, where they pay tribute to the strength of his convictions. So ends the Saint's underworld journey, resonant with these Virgilian echoes. See Bertram Colgrave, *Felix's Life of St. Guthlac* (see note 40), 103–07. This prose account is significantly more detailed in its underworld imagery than either Guthlac A or B, the (presumably later) verse versions of the story appearing in the Exeter MS. Even so, Guthlac A features detailed interaction between the saint-hero and the demons he encounters in the underworld, maintaining the motif of the heroic warrior-saint in mortal combat with demons. Meanwhile, Guthlac B is more sparing in its details, even as it portrays the saint as a martyred figure realizing eternal life, and features dialogue between the hero and comparable demonic figures. See Benjamin D. Weber, “A Harmony of Contrasts: The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 114.2 (April 2015): 201–18.

⁴⁵ Felix likely had access to many other *Saints' lives*, including those of Saints Martin, Paul, Antonius, and Benedict, to complement “frequent Virgilian echoes,” though none specifically to the *Aeneid's* underworld scenery in Book VI. See Bertram Colgrave, *Felix's Life of Guthlac* (see note 40), preface, 16 and 17.

codes of behavior was more overtly pronounced. In a space where conceptions of sin and transgression, having matured and diversified according to changing social and economic factors, likewise have transformed attitudes toward recreation, mirth, and leisure.

The late twelfth-century monastic writer Adam of Eynsham, whose *Visio* reflects this change, depicts his hero's journey through purgatory, capturing these more evolved notions of monastic daily ritual and recreation within a broader population of monastic personalities, whose collective example reflects a more benign range of aristocratically-aligned transgressions and misbehaviors, a collection of condemned souls paying penance for

small offences such as uncontrolled laughing or spreading gossip, or letting their thoughts dwell too long upon the vanities of life, or for minor breaches of the rules of their order, such as using extravagant gestures or signing too much or wandering about the cloister away from their cells to no purpose. I saw some weeping miserably while rolling hot coals about in their mouths for eating fruit and herbs for pleasure and not as medicine. For immoderate laughter they were beaten; for gossip, they received whiplashes to the face, for every penance was suited to its sin.⁴⁶

Other sins, more rooted in monetary exchanges and transactions, invite comparison of pre-and post-Conquest patristic narratives that reflect in their severity a change in attitudes. If we note here the diminishing figure of the saintly hero battling hideous demons, we also discern the continuing fascination with lurid details of transgression. We also recognize the ongoing critique of aristocratic excess and revelry in monastic life across the centuries, and perhaps even the growing tolerance toward and recognition of recreation and amusement in monastic environs, shaped by evolving economic circumstances and culminating in the rich and disquieting fourteenth-century portraits of Langland's *Piers Plowman* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

⁴⁶ *Purgatory: The Revelation of a Monk of Eynsham, in Oxfordshire*: C. 1196. Oxford: Bodleian MS Selden Supra 66. <http://www.eleusinianm.co.uk/middle-english-literature-retold-in-modern-english/visits-to-purgatory/monk-of-eynsham> (last accessed on Jan. 20, 2019). See also: Adam of Eynsham, *The Revelation of the Monk of Eynsham*, ed. Robert Easting. EETS OS, 318 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Fidel Fajardo-Acosta

Subjects of the Game: The Pleasures of Subjection in William IX's "Ben vueill que sapchon li pluzor"

The thirteenth-century romance *Joufroi de Poitiers* features a fictional character based on the historical William IX (1071–1126), Duke of Aquitaine and VII Count of Poitiers, the earliest-known troubadour and a personality known for his irreverent songs, amorous adventures, and a simultaneously feisty and jocular disposition.¹ In that story, while hiding under a false identity, Joufroi pursues ladies and courtly pleasures in England and elsewhere. He is, however, scolded by a fictional stand-in for the also historical Marcabru (fl. ca. 1130–1149), a twelfth-century troubadour notorious for his fierce moralizing, who objects to Joufroi neglecting his duties and wasting his time, while his domains are ravaged by his enemies. Commenting on the *Joufroi*, Fasseur writes: "... le discours de Marcabru met en lumière, plus que l'imposture d'identité, ce à quoi nous ne songions même pas: le maquement du comte à ses devoirs féodaux. ... l'amour apparaît comme un divertissement préjudiciable à l'exercice de la seigneurie et à l'engagement dans la guerre" (Marcabru's speech sheds light, more than on his false identity, on what we might not even suspect, the Count's neglect of his feudal duties ... love is presented as a diversion prejudicial to the exercise of lordship and the conducting of warfare; this translation and all others are mine, unless marked otherwise).² Though composed a century after William's

1 I'm very grateful to Albrecht Classen for his invaluable and tireless help, advice and the opportunity to present this study at the 15th International Symposium on Medieval and Early Modern Studies, "Pleasure and Leisure: Toys, Games, and Entertainment in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age," held at the University of Arizona in May 2018. I am also much indebted to the Rev. Fr. José Luis del Valle Merino, Director of the Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, as well as the Patrimonio Nacional de España and, in particular, Eugenio Hernando Mora and Pablo Andrés Escapa, for providing the necessary materials and granting permission for the publication in this article of images from MS. T.I.6 of Alfonso X's *Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas* (1283).

2 Valérie Fasseur, "Anamorphoses d'un discours amoureux: Présence de Marcabru dans *Joufroi de Poitiers*," *Romania* 127 (2009): 86–103; here 90. *Joufroi de Poitiers. Roman d'aventures du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Percival B. Fay and John L. Grigsby. Textes littéraires français, 183 (Geneva: Droz; Paris: Minard, 1972).

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own work, the *Joufroi* sheds light on the reality of concern among courtly subjects about the ways in which courtly culture itself, particularly its forms of leisure, functioned to disempower individuals and render them into subjects and victims of other powers.

One of William's songs, "Ben vueill que sapchon li pluzor" (I really want most people to know), is particularly significant, in these respects, for its explicitly bringing together of a multiplicity of courtly pastimes – board games, the courting of ladies, and the composition and performance of songs – in a situation where the speaker is persuaded to play a game that, ultimately, may not be in his best interest.³ The song features the metaphor of a board game of *taulas*

3 William/Guilhem IX (Graf von Poitiers/lo Coms de Peiteus) is listed as author no. 183 in Alfred Pillet and Henry Carstens, *Bibliographie der Troubadours*. Bibliography and Reference Series, 166 (New York: Burt Franklin, 1968), 155–58; reprint of issue no. 3 of *Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gessellschaft Sonderreihe* (Halle an der Saale: Max Niemeyer, 1933). He is referred to, in the manuscript rubrics and his *vida* (biography), as *coms/comte de peiteus* (variously spelled as *peitieu*, *peytius*, *peiteus*) or *peitavin*: *Guglielmo IX d'Aquitania: Poesie*, ed. Nicolò Pasero (Rome: Mucchi, 1973); Jean Boutière, Alexander H. Schutz, and Irénée M. Cluzel, *Biographies des troubadours: textes provençaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles*. Classiques d'Oc (Paris: Nizet, 1964), 7. Latin texts call him "Guillelmus," "Willelmus," "dux Aquitanorum," "comes Pictavensis," "comes Pictavorum," "Pictauesium dux": *The Poetry of William VII, Count of Poitiers, IX Duke of Aquitaine*, ed. and trans. Gerald A. Bond. Garland Library of Medieval Literature, Series A, 4 (New York and London: Garland, 1982), 91–141. Though its inscription is badly deteriorated, a seal from around 1107 reads, "SIGILLUM WILLERMI DUX AQUITANORUM": François Eygun, *Sygillographie du Poitou jusqu'en 1515: Étude d'histoire provinciale sur les institutions, les arts et la civilisation d'après les sceaux* (Poitiers: Société des Antiquaires de l'Ouest, 1938), 159, Plate 1; also reproduced in *Poetry of William*, ed. Bond (see this note above), x. In modern scholarship, he is identified as William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, 1071–1127 [sic] (Name Authority Heading, Library of Congress), Guillaume d'Aquitaine (1071–1127 [sic]), Guillaume VII (Comte de Poitiers) (Type d'autorité/Entrées d'index autorité personne, Bibliothèque nationale de France): Kathryn Klingebiel, "Guilhem IX: Banned at the BN?" *Tenso* 24 (2009): 63–81. As Klingebiel notes, William died in 1126 and not 1127 (73–74). Other forms of his name, however, are also employed, including his Occitan name, Guilhem, and national variants such as Guillaume, Guillem, Guglielmo, Wilhelm, Guillermo, in various combinations with the numbers IX and VII and the corresponding titular designations as ruler of the duchy of Aquitaine and the county of Poitiers/Poitou. On the significant problems posed by such a wide variety of naming conventions, see Klingebiel. Eleven songs are attributed to William. Most, if not all of them were composed after 1101–1102 – the time of his participation in an unsuccessful crusade in the Near East – and before 1120, when he joined a crusade against the Moors in Spain (*Poetry of William*, ed. Bond [see this note above], xxxvi–xxxvii). The main editions of his songs are *Poetry of William*, ed. Bond (see this note above); *Guglielmo IX*, ed. Pasero (see this note above); *Les Chansons de Guillaume IX, Duc d'Aquitaine (1071–1127)*, ed. Alfred Jeanroy, 2nd rev. ed. (1913; Paris: Champion, 1927); id., "Les Poésies de Guillaume IX, Comte de Poitiers," *Annales du Midi* 17.66 (1905): 161–217; Karl Bartsch, *Chrestomathie Provençale (Xe–XVe siècles)*, ed. Eduard Koschwitz, 6th

(tables) to represent a sexual encounter.⁴ While offering an illustration of the pastimes in western European courtly milieus of the early twelfth century, the imagery and language of the song are also revealing of the serious and complex functions of entertainment, as a form of education and of social and political control.⁵ Courtly leisure activities, in effect, not only structured and occupied the free time of courtiers but played a role in the formulation, definition and encouragement of values and specific forms of conduct and manners correspond-

ed. (Marburg a.d. L.: Elwert, 1904; Elberfeld: R. L. Friderichs, 1868), cols. 31–36; *Die Lieder Guillems IX, Grafen von Peitieu, Herzogs von Aquitanien*, ed. Wilhelm Ludwig Holland and Heinrich Adelbert von Keller, 2nd ed. (1848; Tübingen: L. F. Fues, 1850); and François J. M. Raynouard, *Choix des poésies originales des troubadours*, 6 vols. (Paris: Didot, 1816–1821), vol. 5 (1820): 115–21.

4 “Ben vueill que sapchon li pluzor” (I really want most people to know), 183.2 in Pillet and Carstens, *Bibliographie* (see note 3). Song 6 in *Poetry of William*, ed. Bond (see note 3), 24–27, 67–70; *Guglielmo IX*, ed. Pasero (see note 3), 157–86; *Chansons de Guillaume IX*, ed. Jeanroy (1927; see note 3), 13–16, 36–38. Song 1 in Bartsch, *Chrestomathie* (see note 3), cols. 31–33; *Lieder Guillems IX*, ed. Holland and Keller (see note 3), 7–9; Raynouard, *Choix des poésies* (see note 3), 5: 116–17.

5 Codes of law, morality, and manners, as well as cultural ideologies, like courtliness and chivalry, played significant roles in the shaping of the more refined, self-regulated and self-motivated individuals – “loving subjects,” as Gerald A. Bond has aptly called them – required for participation in courtly life: *The Loving Subject: Desire, Eloquence, and Power in Romanesque France*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995); C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939–1210*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval French Literature and Law* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1977); Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*. Vol. 1: *The History of Manners*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Pantheon, 1978); originally, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation: soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*. Vol. 1: *Wandlungen des Verhaltens in den weltlichen Oberschichten des Abendlandes* (Basel: Verlag Haus zum Falken, 1939); Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages: A Study of the Forms of Life, Thought and Art in France and the Netherlands in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, trans. F. Hopman (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955; London: Edward Arnold, 1924), originally *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen: studie over levens- en gedachtenvormen der veertiende en vijftiende eeuw in Frankrijk en de Nederlanden* (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, 1919). While modern subjects take for granted that the pursuit of self-interest is the fundamental and inescapable reality of human existence, that was far from obvious in the Middle Ages and continues to be questionable in societies where certain norms, values, and beliefs override considerations of personal advantage. Ironically, it is precisely at the moment in European history when self-interest emerges as a “value” that secular law and various other regulatory systems spring into action. The case of crusaders and crusading ideology is instructive in these respects: Fidel Fajardo-Acosta, *Courtly Seductions, Modern Subjections: Troubadour Literature and the Medieval Construction of the Modern World*. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 376 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010), 175–76.

ing to the historical conditions that made courtly life possible.⁶ Placed in the context of the centralization and concentration of political authority, the growth of trade and markets, the rise of law and legislation, and the hierarchical stratification of aristocratic and other groups that took place during the courtly ages, the song sheds light on the functions of leisure in the representation and enabling of affects and subjectivities suitable to the changing conditions of the time.

As a powerful aristocrat immersed in courtly life and personally engaged in cultural production, William was clearly invested in, and had much to gain from, the dissemination and promotion of the values explicit and implicit in courtly pastimes. At the same time, the very values and tools he employed in the advancing of those interests put into question his own autonomy and subjected him to powers larger than his own. William's song, in those senses, offers suggestive evidence that the seemingly playful and leisurely life of aristocrats in twelfth-century Occitan courts was marked not so much by carefree happiness and libidinal, ludic, or other freedoms but, quite the contrary, by subjection to the rules of an increasingly structured and intensely competitive way of life, one demanding obedience to law and also the acceptance, as a normal state, of the turns of a wheel of fortune driven not so much by chance but by the hidden mechanisms of systematic and growing powers.⁷ Lending lighthearted charm to the rising scaffolding of the courts, the markets, and the law, courtly culture helped make such submission seem pleasurable and desirable, even irresistible, presenting it as joyful participation in a life of love, song, and games – a series of tantalizing but all-consuming and, ultimately, very costly endeavors.⁸

6 Albrecht Classen notes that chess in the Middle Ages was considered a “representation of courtly society at large”; “the chessboard and its pieces powerfully served ... poets and writers as some of the most fascinating and far-reaching literary images to reflect upon fundamental ideals, values, principles, and concepts determining courtly society and its relationship both to the lower classes and also to God”: “Chess in Medieval German Literature: A Mirror of Social-Historical and Cultural, Religious, Ethical, and Moral Conditions,” *Chess in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: A Fundamental Thought Paradigm of the Premodern World*, ed. Daniel O'Sullivan. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 10 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 17–44; here 42.

7 Cf. Moishe Postone's description of the situation of subjects under modern western capitalism: “... a system of abstract, impersonal domination. Relative to earlier social forms, people appear to be independent; but they actually are subject to a system of social domination that seems not social but ‘objective’ ... which exists, like a fate, outside of them”: *Time, Labor and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 125.

8 Discussing the cultural work at the court of Alfonso X el Sabio, king of Castile and Leon and author/sponsor of the *Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas* (1283; Book of Chess, Dice and Backgammon), Jennifer Cooley notes similar effects of political containment in his deployment and reg-

Board games like chess and backgammon, the composition and performance of songs, as well as competitive amorous pursuits were central features of courtly leisure during the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Though no doubt pleasurable and significant in themselves as entertainment, these pastimes constituted symbolic practices reflecting and contributing to the norming of desires and the promotion of the codes of conduct, manners, and laws that were becoming essential to the functioning of larger, more complex and diverse polities. Among other attitudes, games helped instill in their players a feeling of reverence toward and obedience to the rule of law, also encouraging participation in the highly fluid and competitive dynamics of the courtly life. An integral part of the courtier's moral education, games reinforced and helped players understand what could be considered worthy of praise and social advancement, i.e., ambitious and competitive but dutiful and orderly behavior, loyal service to lord and lady, self-sacrifice and patience, as well as the willingness to vie for rewards with other courtiers within the confines of strict protocols and other willingly accepted conventions and formalities.⁹ In general, the games of the time reflected the idea that competition and exchange regulated by law constituted a benefit for all involved, and that the pursuit of personal gain and pleasure were legitimate aspects of social life, even obligatory ones. Though one cannot speak yet of national states, a full-fledged market economy, or an autonomous self-seeking subject, the lineaments of those modern institutions and subjectivities began to take shape in the courtly life and the games played by European courtiers of the High Middle Ages.

As activities with consequences to the minds and lives of those who play them, games have costs, to individuals and to established or potential ways of life, which are by no means insignificant, and which have occasioned writers, medieval and modern, to moralize against them.¹⁰ Some of the controversial aspects of entertainment are related to emerging forms of economic, political and social life that clash with traditional and other perspectives. Jenny Adams char-

ulation of games: "Games for the Nation: A Postmodern Reading of Alfonso's *Libro de ajedrez, dados y tablas*," *Studies in Medievalism XIII 2004: Postmodern Medievalisms*, ed. Richard Utz and Jesse G. Swan (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), 143–57. Cooley comments, in particular, on the problems of the Alfonsine political vision of diversity and individual freedoms, "whose ultimate beneficiary may be the state itself, and not necessarily the individuals who resided therein," in effect "sustaining discrimination in a palatable and functional manner" (143–44).

⁹ As Albrecht Classen has noted, games like chess, popular in courtly settings, were seen by medieval writers as an allegory of the entire order of courtly society and were considered useful in the discussion of moral and ethical themes: "Chess" (see note 6), 21.

¹⁰ See Albrecht Classen's "Introduction" in this volume, particularly the section "The Public Debate About the Value of Leisure Activities: Medieval Perspectives."

acterizes the game of chess in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* as a metaphor, connected to the realities of commercial life and market transactions, representing unequal exchange, a zero-sum game associated with loss of autonomy and economic independence, so that, in the case of Criseyde, "her best strategy is to avoid it altogether."¹¹ Also addressing the game of chess, Albrecht Classen noted its associations, in both medieval and modern contexts, with sinister economic and political forces tending toward the enslavement and destruction of the individual. Supporting the idea, Classen pointed to the scenes in Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan*, where the young Tristan is kidnapped by Norwegian merchants who employ a beautifully-crafted chess set, one of the objects they peddle, to lure him into their vessel. Drawn into a chess match with one of the merchants, Tristan is distracted and fails to notice the ship leaving behind the coastlines of his homeland. As he realizes what has happened, Tristan despairs and curses the game, wishing he had quit it and vowing to hate it forever. As Classen notes, "playing chess proves to be highly symbolic of Tristan's precarious existence, himself being nothing but a chess piece on the playing board of love," and further observes that "the chess game is mentioned so commonly in medieval German courtly literature because it served so exceedingly well as a symbol of courtly society, its values, and ideals, but then also of its failures and possible breakdown."¹² Illustrating the continuity of those concerns in the Middle Ages and the modern world, Classen commented, in the same essay, on Stefan Zweig's *Schachnovelle* (1942; Chess Novella), pointing out its contexts of fascism and technocratic totalitarianism, and its relations to the state of mind of Zweig at the time of his suicide. Classen describes the work as,

... a most powerful twentieth-century novella in which chess assumes central importance as an icon, a metaphor, and as a most complex symbol of how man can get caught in social, political, and ideological constraints and then faces the danger of breaking down in that system.¹³

A similarly powerful work, also mulling the plight of the individual contemplating suicide, Goethe's *Faust* engages directly the matter of the ludic conditions of the coming about of the modern subject, which takes shape as he embraces pleasure and rejects the traditional distinctions of good and evil, even the idea of God. Such a subject is defined then not by devotion to God and desire

¹¹ Jenny Adams, *Power Play: The Literature and Politics of Chess in the Late Middle Ages*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 95–97.

¹² Classen, "Chess" (see note 6), 24, 26.

¹³ Classen, "Chess" (see note 6), 18.

for spiritual salvation, but by an erotic object of desire, the body of Gretchen, and a deal with an evil spirit, Mephistopheles, who understands very well the subjecting power of games. Though willing to make a deal with the devil, Faust is conscious that what Mephistopheles can offer is ultimately vain and worthless. In the second *Studierzimmer* (Faust's Study) Scene of Part I, Faust asks: "Was willst du armer Teufel geben? / ... / Ein Spiel, bei dem man nie gewinnt, / Ein Mädchen, ...?" (What can you offer miserable devil? / ... / A game that man can never win, / a Maiden ...?; all translations of Goethe's text are my own). Later, in the *Hexenküche* (Witch's Kitchen) Scene, Faust and Mephistopheles encounter a family of monkeys, the witch's familiars. The older male monkey converses with Mephistopheles and begs him: "O würfle nur gleich / Und mach mich reich / Und lass mich gewinnen!" (Oh please cast the dice already, / and make me rich, / and let me win!). Mephistopheles replies, in language that is almost Nietzschean: "Wie glücklich würde sich der Affe schätzen, / Könnt er nur auch ins Lotto setzen" (How lucky the ape would esteem himself, / if he only he could also play the lottery"). At that point the stage directions indicate the younger monkeys have been playing with a "grossen Kugel" (large ball). The older monkey states:

Das ist die Welt
 Sie steigt und fällt
 Und rollt beständig
 Sie klingt wie Glas –
 Wie bald bricht das?
 Ist hohl inwendig
 Hier glänzt sie sehr
 Und hier noch mehr
 ...
 Sie ist von Ton
 Es gibt Scherben.¹⁴

[That is the world, / it rises and falls, / and constantly rolls. / It sounds like glass, / how soon will it break? / It is hollow inside. / Here it shines brightly, / and here even more / ... / It is made of clay, / there will be broken shards].

The monkeys' subjection to the witch and their interest in various forms of frivolous play, from gambling to ball games, constitute a parody of Faust's own desire for pleasurable experiences and bondage to Mephistopheles. The equation of the fragile, hollow, glass-like ball to the world further stresses the emptiness and

14 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust. Eine Trägedie*, Part I and Part II in one volume (Stuttgart: Cotta'scher Verlag, 1862), 62, 90–91.

vanity of the games proposed by the devil, which, on the other hand, carry a heavy cost, possibly the loss of Faust's soul.

Perhaps most importantly, the seduction of Faust by Mephistopheles reproduces the conditions, as in the courtly era, of the individual wanting to enter the circles of pleasure associated with the life of the nobility. Mephistopheles, accordingly, dresses the part and defines himself as an aristocrat who is well-versed in the arts of leisure. In the second *Studierzimmer* Scene, Mephistopheles tells Faust:

Bin ich, als edler Junker, hier
In rothem, goldverbrämten Kleide,
Das Mäntelchen von starrer Seide,
Die Hahnenfeder auf dem Hut,
Mit einem langen, spitzen Degen,
Und rathe nun dir, kurz und gut,
Dergleichen gleichfalls anzulegen,
Damit du, losgebunden, frei,
Erfahrest, was das Leben sey.¹⁵

[I am like a noble squire here / in a red, gold-embroidered gown, / a cloak of stiff silks, / a cock feather in the hat, / with a long, sharp fencing sword, / and now I advise you, quick and good, / to likewise put on similar attire, / so that you, released from all bonds, free, / can experience what life can be]

Later in the witch's kitchen, Mephistopheles tells her:

Du nennst mich Herr Baron, so ist die Sache gut;
Ich bin ein Cavalier wie andre Cavaliere.
Du zweifelst nicht an meinem edeln Blut;
Sieh her, das ist das Wappen, das ich führe!¹⁶

[Call me Lord Baron, and all will be fine; / I am a knight like other knights. / Do not doubt the nobility of my blood; look here, this is the coat of arms I bear!]

Right after Faust drinks the witch's potion and immediately before his first encounter with Gretchen in the *Strasse* Scene, Mephistopheles promises Faust: "Den edeln Müssigang lehr' ich hernach dich schätzen / Und bald empfindest du mit innigem Ergötzen" (I will teach you soon to appreciate noble leisure / and soon you will experience an intimate pleasure). By the end of Part I of

¹⁵ Goethe, *Faust* (see note 14), 57.

¹⁶ Goethe, *Faust* (see note 14), 95.

the tragedy, however, Faust experiences the full horror of noble leisure, games, and finery that result not in pleasure but in death, misery and despair.

In literal terms Faust pays in suffering and danger to his soul for his indulging in the devil's games. Metaphorically, the cost is the loss of individuality, autonomy and independence of subjects lured, by the charms of a seemingly noble, pleasurable and leisurely life, into the stern political and economic disciplines of an existence unlike anything seen in Europe since the crumbling of the Roman empire. For Goethe, the visions of the birth of the modern subject, of the origins of the modern nation-states, and of the "Krieg, Handel und Piraterie" (war, trade, and piracy) of the international economy, were retrospective.¹⁷ For William IX, they were prospective.

Minds and Methods

While no assumptions are made about the minds, or "psychology," of premodern people, it is clear subjectivities have a history and undergo developments related to multiple contextual phenomena. Medieval minds and psychic structures, however, are not accessible directly and are only implied in the language recorded in textual media. Devices such as manuscripts preserving troubadour songs were, furthermore, rarely produced contemporaneously with the composition and oral performance of such songs. The gaps that stand between modern readers and premodern psyches are then substantial, but not insurmountable. Bridging those gaps requires a synergy of interdisciplinary methods, such as those of Cultural Studies that see culture as a dynamic phenomenon, a multifaceted and active force that is shaped by human agents who, in turn, are themselves shaped by the artifacts and systems of ideas they enable.¹⁸

Other methodologies relevant to this investigation include the *nouvelle histoire* of the Annales School, Foucault's archaeology of discourse, and close attention to both matters of socioeconomic class and concrete individuality, as seen in the work of scholars like Carlo Ginzburg.¹⁹ Ginzburg, in particular, believed it

¹⁷ Goethe, *Faust* (see note 14), 428.

¹⁸ See note 21.

¹⁹ *La Nouvelle Histoire*, ed. Jacques Le Goff, Roger Chartier, and Jacques Revel. Les encyclopédies du savoir moderne (Paris: Retz-Centre d'étude et de promotion de la lecture [C.E.P.L.], 1978); Michel Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969); Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); originally, *Il formaggio e i vermi: Il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1976).

was possible to recover, at least to some extent, the experiences and ideas of even a humble and seemingly insignificant individual, who lacked access to media of self-expression, and whose history was preserved in the record of an inquisitorial procedure intent on discrediting his way of thinking and destroying his body. Ginzburg stressed the value of the particular experiences of such an individual, even if his mind could be considered much less than typical, in the puzzling out of larger patterns, even whole cultures or subcultures, relevant to the peasant classes of his day.²⁰ What is true of a lowly member of the peasantry is no less true of an aristocrat with access to the most sophisticated media of self-expression available in his day, resources that allowed him a voice, but that also exerted their own influence in the shaping of his subjectivity. Neither a history of mentalities nor a microhistory, the present study is rather an attempt to more fully characterize the textually-implicit desires, fears, and experiences of a unique individual within a framework of ascertainable cultural trends and historical developments from which individual subjectivity is never independent.

Theory of Games

There is nothing innocent about games. As it has often been pointed out, games have a double character as entertainment and as serious endeavors. A game can be played for pleasure and/or as a means to acquire money, valuable objects, or other forms of property, as well as intangibles like reputation and a position within a hierarchy. Merely being a winner, even in the absence of other rewards, confers status on the winner as standing in a position of superiority over non-winners. Games furthermore are understood by modern and postmodern scholars, in Cultural Studies and other disciplines, as symbolic representations – microcosmic images of social, economic and political life – that reflect and reinforce, and also help transform and remake the culture, values, aspirations, and ways of life of the peoples who play them.²¹ Games as we know and practice

²⁰ Ginzburg, *Cheese and Worms* (see note 19), xx–xxi.

²¹ Cultural Studies' scholars have often pointed out that play has cognitive and culture-making functions capable of symbolically representing the social, political, economic and cultural world in which the game exists and is played: Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949); originally, *Homo ludens: Versuch einer Bestimmung des Spielelements der Kultur* (Basel and Amsterdam: Burg-Verlag/Pantheon akademisch Verlaganstalt, 1944), and *Homo Ludens: Proeve eener bepaling van het spel-element de cultuur* (Harleem: H. D. Tjeenk Willink, 1938); Roger Caillois, *Les jeux et les hommes: le masque et le vertige*. Collection Idées (1958; Paris: Gallimard, 1967); Clifford Geertz,

them, most often represent a regulated, many times competitive, interaction between agents who agree to be bound by a set of rules, in expectation of rewards to be given. The rewards – money, property, rights, tokens, or just the sense of being the “winner” or having been entertained – are considered valuable by the players, as evidenced by their participation in the game. The value and desirability of the rewards themselves would appear to be determined by external factors, e.g., the value of money and property is said to be determined in markets. Markets, however, themselves can be modeled as a game. They too are a regulated interaction between agents who engage in the pursuit of rewards whose value is determined in the course of the market transactions themselves. What this suggests is that, at least in arenas like markets and games, interactions are not just pleasurable in themselves, or avenues for the acquisition of something extrinsically defined as desirable, but rather the very grounds that define what is desirable. Games come to embody the pleasurable indeed, but only as a function of the very values they define. What is valuable is determined through an interactive performance of agents who figure the valuable as the object they pursue.²² Games thus are pleasurable and constitutive of the pleasurable. By playing a game, we learn both how and what to love.

“Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 412–53. In sociology, the school of symbolic interactionism has made similar claims: John R. Kelly, “Multiple Dimensions of Meaning in the Domains of Work, Family, and Leisure,” *Journal of Leisure Research* 26 (1994): 250–74; id., “Leisure Interaction and the Social Dialectic,” *Social Forces* 60 (1981): 304–22. More recently, the study of games is emerging as an independent discipline, Game Studies/Ludology, concerned with the relations of games to wider contexts; see Gonzalo Frasca, “Simulation versus Narrative: Introduction to Ludology,” *The Video Game Theory Reader*, ed. Mark J. P. Wolf and Bernard Perron (New York; London: Routledge, 2003), 221–36; Thomas M. Malaby and Timothy Burke, “The Short and Happy Life of Interdisciplinarity in Game Studies,” *Games and Culture* 4.4 (2009): 323–30. To this we would have to add the character of gaming as an activity producing inter-subjective meanings, “a flickering process constantly merging with ordinary life”: Markus Montola, “Social Constructionism and Ludology: Implications for the Study of Games,” *Simulation & Gaming* 43.3 (2012): 300–20; here 303. From the perspective of phenomenology, Eugen Fink noted the connections of play and religion as forms of symbolic representation: “... the stage, whose boards in fact signify the world”: *Play as Symbol of the World and Other Writings*, trans. Ian Alexander Moore and Christopher Turner. *Studies in Continental Thought* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2016), 27; originally, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol.7: *Spiel als Weltsymbol*, ed. Cathrin Nielsen and Hans Rainer Sepp (Freiburg i. Br.: Verlag Karl Alber, 2010).

22 Postmarxist scholars like Moishe Postone have argued that values, in the form of the commodity, are created in market economies not just by market transactions but also at the level of production, through the social mediation of labor: “According to Marx, the dual function of labor in capitalism as abstract labor and as concrete labor, as an activity that mediates people’s relations with one another and with nature, constitutes the fundamental structuring form of so-

An object of desire, on the other hand, is a source of identity and subjectivity. As it has been argued before, the expression, *amo ergo sum* (I love, therefore I am), is a dictum of significant substance regarding cultural mechanisms of subjection and the role of affective forces in the constitution of individual and social identities.²³ To love, indeed, is to be, to desire to actively participate in the interactions, and be part of the constructs of given forms of culture and social life. If, however, games create objects of desire, and desire for those objects creates identity, then games are also the source of that identity. *Ludo ergo sum* may then be as valid a proposition as *amo ergo sum*. As for the *cogito*, it may be said that thinking is a variety of solitary game where the self “interacts” with itself in an inner dialogue regulated by the rules of language and reason.²⁴

Like other games, thinking has its rewards too, in the form of the “truths” pursued by lovers of such truths, the literally so-named “philosophers” – subjects characterized by a specific role and identity within the structured, game-like activity of reasoning. The subjects of a game then, its players, can be said, in general, to be defined both by the objects they pursue and the manner in which they pursue those objects. In other words, in game activities, objects define subjects and subjects, in the course of their interactions, define objects.

Purely in the abstract, a game is a formal, ritual performance where anything can be posited as the object of desire. In practice, regardless of what literal rewards are defined as the object of a game, the game cannot be dissociated from those rewards and is therefore part of them. As specific interactions, even if just with imaginary or mechanical agents, are some of the aspects of all games, those interactions also become an aspect of the rewards. Thus, the game, its rules, and the interactions it prescribes become desirable in themselves by virtue of their association with the given rewards.²⁵ To desire winning and the

cial life in capitalism – the commodity. He treats the commodity as a socially constituted and constituting form – ‘subjective’ as well as ‘objective’ – of social practice” (*Time, Labor, and Social Domination* [see note 7], 385). I’m grateful to my former student, Miles F. Loggie, now a Market Intelligence Analyst, for his suggestions regarding the relevance of Postone’s ideas to the study of games.

23 Fajardo-Acosta, *Courtly Seductions* (see note 5), 2.

24 “Playing is, structurally, not an individual or isolated activity – it is open to one’s fellow human beings as fellow-players. It is no objection to point out that frequently, though, the ones playing carry out their games ‘all alone,’ apart from their fellow human beings. For, in the first place, being open to possible fellow-players is already included in the sense of play, and, in the second place, such a solitary person often plays with imaginary partners. The community of play need not consist of a number of real persons” (Fink, *Play* [see note 21], 23).

25 “For binding oneself to the already valid rules of play is often experienced pleasurably and positively” (Fink, *Play* [see note 21], 23)

rewards of a game is to desire the game itself. The love of winning brings about the love of the game, but the love of the game may exist, even in the absence of winning – suggesting the structured activity defined by the game can itself be the object of desire. Especially in times of defeat, players are often heard asserting that the important thing is not so much winning, as getting to play. The object of a game then can be, and in a sense always is, the game itself, understood as the entire array of its roles, rules, and rewards, not excluding the material artifacts, media and other devices in which the game is embodied and through which it is performed.

As a specific game can become an object of desire, so can *games*, in the plural, i.e., the loving of multiple games or games in general. Love of games, in turn, as an affect associated with regulated interactions, involves a love of law, that is, a desire for the guidelines that make games, orderly social life, and identity possible – for the structure of rules that is the foundation of selfhood and being, of life and its rewards, and that cannot be contradicted, on pain of absolute loss and non-existence. At that higher level of generality, as sources of a desire for law, games are expressions of desire for the power that expresses itself in and underwrites the law, the authority that motivates and makes law effective, through its enforcement mechanisms, in the allocation and delivery of punishments and rewards. Behind every game and every player, then, there is indeed both a will and a subjection to power that defines appropriate subjects, players willing to play the game and to commit themselves to its stated losses and rewards, and its ultimate consequences. One of the rewards of such subjection is the opportunity to partake, however indirectly, of the power to regulate and dictate human behavior and outcomes which the game embodies. While a player may not always get to win, s/he gets to see the opponents similarly subjected and takes pleasure in that domination, which s/he perceives as fair and just, defined by the rules of the game.

Beyond the assigning of rewards and losses, the norming of desire, behavior, and subjectivity, and the training of subjects for participation in regulated endeavors, including political subjection, a game imposes on its players the burden of the game itself, i.e., its brute existence as a time-bound performance requiring the player's undivided attention. All players of a game, winners or losers, must pay a price for their choice to play the game, what economists call an "opportunity cost." Playing a game indeed means the player, while occupied playing the game, cannot participate in other endeavors, which must necessarily be neglected, postponed, or abandoned altogether. Playing a game is then a highly consequential economic decision that enthralls the players to the game's values and activities, in the process preventing players from playing a different game, or doing anything else for that matter.

Overall, one might say that playing a game or partaking in any other form of entertainment may be amusing in some ways but is always also an intensely serious activity, as an individual is transformed, by the ludic activity, into a subject of the specific game and of a number of other structured orders.²⁶ In that sense, the game is much like an input-output machine which processes human raw material and transforms it according to the algorithms implicit in the game's design. The individual before and after the ludic experience is a different person, with different values, attitudes and desires. There is, after all, something perhaps not entirely irrational about the resistance a child might offer to being placed on a ferris wheel or a roller coaster – those giant bio-political factories that extract grateful subjects from the terrors of seemingly harmless pleasures.²⁷

Ben vueill que sapchon li pluzor

A *gap/gab* or boasting song, William IX's "Ben vueill que sapchon li pluzor" features a board game played by a male speaker and a lady.²⁸ The game is described

26 "That we thus live *in play*, that we do not come upon it as an extrinsic occurrence, points to the human being as the 'subject' of play" (Fink, *Play* [see note 21], 15). "Play is primordially the strongest *binding power*" (27).

27 Michel Foucault defined bio-politics as an ensemble of methods of subjection developed in western nations since the eighteenth century and acting upon human bodies, shaping and redirecting libidinal forces in the service of specific political and economic systems: "... bio-power was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes. But this was not all it required; it also needed the growth of both these factors, their reinforcement as well as their availability and docility; it had to have methods of power capable of optimizing forces, aptitudes, and life in general without at the same time making them more difficult to govern" (*The History of Sexuality*, Volume 1: *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House/Vintage Books, 1990), 140–41; originally, *La volonté de savoir* [Paris: Gallimard, 1976]). As it turns out, however, western bio-political methodologies have a much longer history than Foucault suspected, as they were already visible in the ludic and amorous practices that emerged in western Europe during the High Middle Ages: Simon Gaunt, *Martyrs to Love: Love and Death in Medieval French and Occitan Courtly Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 71.

28 The exact time of the song's composition is unknown but William's works can be dated to around 1102–1119: *Poetry of William*, ed. Bond (see note 3), xxxvi–xxxvii, l–liv. The piece is attested in four medieval manuscripts: MS C, XIVth c., Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, Fr. 856, 230v; MS D, 1254, Biblioteca Nazionale Estense, Modena, α R.4.4, 198r; MS E, XIVth c. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Fr. 1749, 113–114; and MS N, XIVth c., Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, 819, 229r–229v, 233v–234r.

as played on a “taulier” (l. 55; table/board), using three “datz” (l. 58; dice), while the players sit or lie “sobre coissi” (l. 25; on a cushion/pillow). The game is likely a form of tables (Occ. *taulas*/ O.Sp. *tablas* < Med. Latin *tabulas*), or backgammon, popular in European courts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries:

... played with pieces, each of which was called *tabula* in Mediaeval Latin ... flat circular disks resembling those now used for backgammon and draughts, but larger and often elaborately carved. From the name of the man, *tabula*, is also derived the name of the board, ML. *tabularium*, It. *tavoliere*, Sp. *tablero* ... Prov. *taulier*, Fr. *tablier*, ME *tabler* ... The mediæval board was identical with our backgammon board, and like it, was generally composed of two halves hinged together to close as a box.²⁹

The game of *taulas/tablas* is illustrated in Alfonso X of Castile's *Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas* (1283), also known as *Libro de los juegos* (Fig. 1).³⁰ Though Alfonso's work postdates that of William by over a hundred and fifty years, the Castilian court over which he presided constituted, in important respects, a high point of the courtly culture that William inaugurated. Himself a troubadour, Alfonso authored and/or sponsored the composition and writing of large collections of courtly songs, on both sacred and profane topics – the *Cantigas de escarnio y de maldecir*, and the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* – on manuscripts that give the clearest available visual images of courtly life in the High Middle Ages.³¹

29 H. J. R. (Harold James Ruthven) Murray, “The Medieval Game of Tables,” *Medium Aevum* 10.2 (1941): 57–69; here 58; *Poetry of William*, ed. Bond (see note 3), 69. The word “backgammon” did not come into use till sometime in the seventeenth century and is supposed to have originated in the notion of “back-game, back-play ... ‘because the pieces are (in certain circumstances) taken up and obliged to go back, that is re-enter at the table’”: *Oxford English Dictionary*, OED Online. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com> (last accessed on Nov. 12, 2012). It is quite possible, however, that the underlying word-compound in “backgammon” is not “back-game” but rather “book-game” (Middle English *bok* + *gamen*), because of the resemblance of the hinged backgammon board to a book that opens, in a similar fashion, to show two leaves: Fidel Fajardo-Acosta, “The King is Dead, Long Live the Game: Alfonso X, el Sabio, and the *Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas*,” *eHumanista* 31 (2015): 489–523; here 509.

30 Alfonso X, *Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas*, ed. Pedro Sánchez-Prieto Borja, Rocío Díaz Moreno, and Elena Trujillo Belso. Edición de textos alfonsies en Real Academia Española, Banco de datos CORDE (Corpus Diacrónico del Español), online at: <http://www.rae.es> (posted: Mar. 7, 2006; last accessed on Sept. 4, 2018); *Libro de los juegos: Acedrex, dados e tablas. Ordenamiento de las Taftererías*, ed. Raúl Orellana Calderón. Biblioteca Castro (Madrid: Fundación José Antonio de Castro, 2007).

31 Alfonso X, *El Cancionero profano de Alfonso X el Sabio: Edición crítica, con introducción, notas y traducción*, ed. Juan Paredes Núñez. Romanica Vulgaria, 10 (L'Aquila: Japadre, 2001; Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 2000); *Cantigas de Santa*



Figure 1. Game of *Tablas* (backgammon). Alfonso X, *Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas* (1283). Folio 75v, MS. T.I.6. Biblioteca Real del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial. © Patrimonio Nacional de España.

One of the most distinct features of the song is its obvious use of the image of the game and its devices as a thinly veiled metaphor for the steps of a sexual seduction and its supposed consummation, the accomplishment that is the main object of the boast. As the song presents it, the situation involves a male speaker facing the predicament of sudden loss of his *mestier* (craft, ability, skill) and incapacity to play the *ioc/joc* (game), as his *datz* are deemed too small by the lady, who scolds him and challenges him to double their value. By carefully lifting her *taulier* (a word with the double meaning of “board/table” and “apron”), the

Maria, ed. Walter Mettmann, 3 vols. Clásicos Castalia, 134, 172, 178 (Madrid: Castalia, 1986–1989).

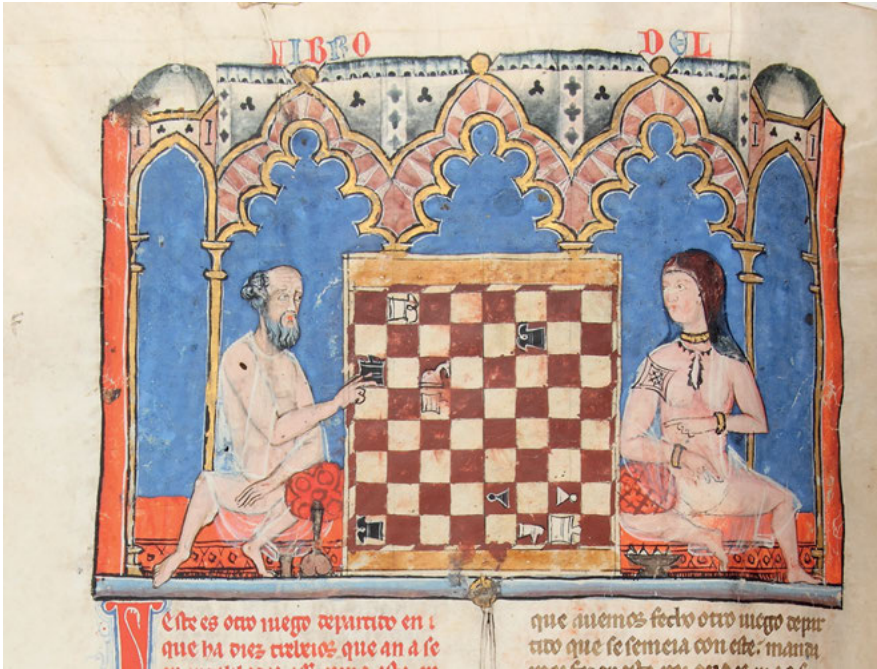


Figure 2. Game of Açedrex (chess). Alfonso X, *Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas* (1283). Folio 40v, MS. T.I.6. Biblioteca Real del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial. © Patrimonio Nacional de España.

speaker regains his *mestier* and, as he claims, the game is played.³² Though the equating of body parts and garments with the game's devices may in itself not be very clever, it would have been appreciated by the circle of the poet's comrades-in-mischief, and also by a broader public with a taste for sexual anecdotes and bawdy material.³³ Explicit linking of sexuality and eroticism to the playing of board games is not unique to William but can also be seen illustrated in Alfonso X's *Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas*, where even a game as intellectually dignified as chess appears to be an occasion for erotic dalliance (Fig. 2).³⁴

³² The meaning of *taulier* as "tablier" (apron) has been questioned, though not conclusively: *Poetry of William*, ed. Bond (see note 3), 70.

³³ Bond suggests that *coissi* (cushion) echoes *coisa* (thigh), possibly lending further support to the idea of anatomical metaphors embedded in the images of the game's devices and setting: *Poetry of William* (see note 3), 69.

³⁴ A series of photographs taken by Julian Wasser at the Pasadena Art Museum, in October 1963, show Marcel Duchamp playing chess with a nude woman, Eve Babitz: Bonnie Clearwater,

As a broadcast of the male speaker's view of events, the song attempts to shape public perceptions in a way favorable to him. It also acknowledges, however, embarrassing events that the song seems designed to qualify so as to make them seem less shameful, even admirable. Literally responding to the criticisms of the lady, the song has the character of a work crafted, as Dumitrescu noted, to respond to more than one challenge, meant perhaps to counter other songs, gossip, or alternative versions of the speaker's abilities in the variety of ludic activities and interactions of courtly life.³⁵ In that sense, the song seems to function as damage-control, attempting to set the record straight by offering the speaker's account of events that transpired between him and the lady in question.

Beyond the expression of the speaker's concern with his reputation as a lover, the song sheds light on the worries and anxieties of members of the aristocratic classes at a time of significant social, political and economic transformations, most notably the centralization of power in royal, ecclesiastical, imperial and other courts. These developments appear to have been particularly challenging to powerful aristocrats like William, whose autonomy and ability to act as he pleased were seriously challenged by rival powers. The complicated and dramatic stories of William's rivalries with fellow aristocrats and ecclesiastics are well documented, most notably his clashes with the lords of Anjou and frictions with ecclesiastics ranging from popes, like Urban II and Paschal II, to bishops,

West Coast Duchamp (Miami Beach, FL: Grassfield Press, 1991), 71–76, Figs. 33–35. Clearwater notes the perils of the situation: “Duchamp risks ridicule as an impotent old man, capable only of playing chess with a voluptuous young woman” (71); “Eve as temptation becomes in chess the ‘trébuchet,’ whereby the obvious move that is so seductive becomes the losing move” (74). Clearwater further comments on the transformation of identity involved in the playing of the game: “anonymity and depersonalization can be equated with a player's willing absorption into the moves conducted on the chess board ... This loss of self in the game can in turn be equated with Duchamp's desire for impersonality through art” (74).

³⁵ Bond sees elements of debate and anticipation of the *joc partit* genre, particularly in ll. 11–14 (*Poetry of William* [see note 3], 68). Maria Dumitrescu, “Èble II de Ventadorn et Guillaume IX d'Aquitaine,” *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 43 (1968): 379–412, argued that the song “semble répondre à plusieurs critiques à la fois ... la vivacité de sa réponse prouve que ces critiques ne le laissaient nullement indifférent” (387; seems to respond to several criticisms at once ... the intensity of the answer proves that these criticisms were not a matter of indifference to him) and “il paraissait répondre, et longuement, aux reproches concernant son manque de courtoisie” (he seemed to be responding, and extensively, to objections regarding his lack of courtesy). The intensely competitive attitude of William is noted by Sarah Kay, *Courtly Contradictions: The Emergence of the Literary Object in the Twelfth Century*. Figurae: Reading Medieval Culture (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), who observes that “the songs of Guilhem de Peitieu ... seem pugnaciously to assert the contrary of what some unspecified interlocutor might expect. Their subtext runs, ‘Contrary to what all of you may think, I maintain ...’” (43).

like Peter II of Poitiers and Eustorge of Limoges, and religious reformers, like Robert d'Arbrissel.³⁶ Women and sexuality, in those conflicts, were objects of contention endowed with attributes of status and value, disputed property, like castles, lands and other resources whose ownership could not be taken for granted. Prone to love affairs and hounded by the Church for his adulteries, William lost both his wives to the Angevin-supported religious community at Fontevrault. Aquitaine itself would eventually be lost to the powers of the north, Anjou and England, through the marriage of William's granddaughter, Eleanor of Aquitaine, to Henry II of England, son of Geoffrey V, Plantagenet, Count of Anjou, and grandson of William IX's archenemy, Fulk V of Anjou. Thus, in the world that he inhabited, William had to deal with the reality that his sense of self-worth and possessions, even the women in his life, had to be earned by continuous and active participation in political struggle, negotiation, and competitive encounters with others, a situation that required skill, vigilance, and willingness to, perhaps more often than he liked, make compromises and obey higher authorities.

The playing of games, understood as participation in structured and regulated competition, constituted a metaphor for such a way of life. The images of Alfonso X's *Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas* permit glimpses of the royal figure encouraging play and overseeing and regulating the games played by his subjects.³⁷ In the miniature of Folio 48r, a king/prince is depicted as he watches, and directs the moves, of two semi-nude women playing chess. The image is particularly useful in that it makes visible the role of higher political authority in the manipulation and shaping of the bodies and desires of his subjects – a structure of games within games where the players operate their own game pieces and the king/prince guides the players as pawns of his own. The erotic character of such images is not an accident of the taste of Alfonso, who was a well-known ladies' man, but a revelation of the relations between games and entertainment and the exercise of power in settings characterized by the centralization of authority and the rule of law (Fig 3).

As in Alfonso's *Libro*, the *Lais* of Marie de France portray courtly games, like chess, as educational activities aimed at shaping the desires of subjects, regulating conduct, and reinforcing their submission, sexual and political, to the desires and requirements of kings and of the structures of power that underwrite kingly authority. The identity of Marie de France is unknown, save for a self-ref-

³⁶ *Poetry of William*, ed. Bond (see note 3), xix–xl; James J. Wilhelm, *Seven Troubadours: The Creators of Modern Verse* (University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 23–38; Alfred Richard, *Histoire des comtes de Poitou*, 2 vols. (Paris: Picard, 1903), I: 382–506.

³⁷ Fajardo-Acosta, “The King is Dead” (see note 29), 492–98.

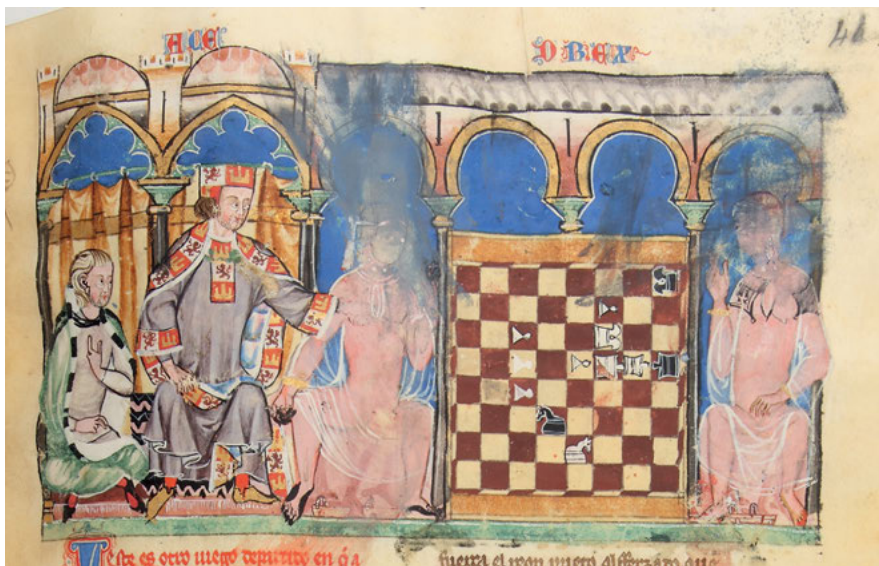


Figure 3. Game of *Açedrex* (chess). Alfonso X, *Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas* (1283). Folio 48r, MS. T.I.6. Biblioteca Real del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial. © Patrimonio Nacional de España.

erence at the end of her *Fables*: “Marie ai num, si sui de France” [My name is Marie, I am from France].³⁸ Though highly intriguing, and not entirely implausible, the hypothesis of Emil Winkler identifying the author with Marie de Champagne (1145–1198) – the daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Louis VII of France, patroness of Chrétien de Troyes and Andreas Capellanus, and great-granddaughter of William – is not taken seriously in contemporary scholarship.³⁹ More widely accepted alternatives, though none of them backed by fully convincing proof, include a number of figures of which perhaps the most likely is a half-sister of Henry II, Marie, Abbess of Shaftesbury around 1181–1215.⁴⁰ Whoever Marie

³⁸ Marie de France, *Fables*, ed., trans. Harriet Spiegel, 2nd ed. (1987; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

³⁹ Emil Winkler, *Französische Dichter des Mittelalters*. II. *Marie de France*. Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. Philosophisch-historische Klasse, 188, 3 (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1918).

⁴⁰ John C. Fox, “Marie de France,” *English Historical Review* 25 (1910): 303–06. Other possibilities have been considered by Urban T. Holmes, Jr., “New Thoughts on Marie de France,” *Studies in Philology* 29 (1932): 1–10, proposing Marie de Meulan, who was married to Hugues Talbot de Cleuville; Antoinette Knappton, “À la recherche de Marie de France,” *Romance Notes* (1978–

de France may have been, however, it is evident from her writings that she was very well-acquainted with the courtly ideologies of the twelfth century and connected to the court of Henry II.

From among the *Lais*, *Eliduc*, in particular, is a notoriously courtly tale that praises the loyalty of Eliduc to his king in spite of the latter's injustices against him. Slandered by jealous rivals, Eliduc is forced to leave his land in Brittany and employ himself to a king in England, promising to serve him for a year. Having to leave behind his loyal and devoted wife, Guildeluec, Eliduc promises to be faithful to her during his absence. His dutiful services and knightly deportment in England, however, lead to Eliduc receiving much praise and honor and, consequently, also the love of Guilliadun, his new lord's young daughter, who is aware of the glowing reports about his prowess: "La fille al rei l'oï numer / E les biens de lui recunter" (ll. 273–74; the daughter of the king heard him named and the good things told about him).⁴¹ In spite of his pledge of loyalty to his wife, Eliduc falls in love with Guilliadun. The chess game is deployed at a key moment in the narrative when Eliduc visits Guilliadun in her chambers. As he arrives, the king, her father, is playing chess with another knight, who, with Guilliadun by his side, is teaching her how to play the game. After asking Eliduc to sit by his side, the king advises his daughter to get to know and show favor to Eliduc, which she gladly agrees to do:

Li reis est del mangier levez,
Es chambres sa fille est entrez;
As eschés cumence a juër
A un chevalier d'utre mer;
De l'autre part de l'eschekier
Deveit sa fillë enseigner.
Elidus est alez avant;
Li reis li fist mut bel semblant,
Dejuste lui seoir li fist.
Sa fille apele, si li dist:

1979): 248–53, suggested Marie de Boulogne, a child of Mathilde de Boulogne and Stephen of Blois; Yolande de Pontfarcy, "Si Marie de France était Marie de Meulan," *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 38 (1995): 353–61, giving additional support to Holmes; Carla Rossi, *Marie de France et les érudits de Cantorbéry* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2009), identifies her as a sister of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket. See now the contributions to *A Companion to Marie de France*, ed. Logan E. Whalen. Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 27 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011); and Sharon Kinoshita and Peggy McCracken, *Marie de France: A Critical Companion*. Gallica, 24 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012).

⁴¹ *Les Lais de Marie de France*, ed. Jean Rychner. Les Classiques Français du Moyen Age (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1971), 155–91; here 163.

“Dameisele, a cest chevalier
 Vus devrïez bien aquintier
 E fere lui mut grant honur:
 Entre cinc cenx nen ad meillur!”
 Quant la meschine ot escuté
 Ceo que sis sire ot cumandé,
 Mut en fu liee la pucele!
 Drescïee s'est, celui apele,
 Luinz des autres se sunt asis.
 Amdui erent d'amur espris.
 (ll. 483–502)

[The king got up after eating and went into his daughter's chambers and began to play chess with a knight from abroad, who, on the other side of the board, was tasked with teaching the game to the king's daughter. Eliduc came forward. The king welcomed him in a very friendly way and made him sit right by his side. He called his daughter and said to her: “Young lady, with this knight you should become well acquainted and do great honor to him; there is not a better one in five hundred!” When the young girl heard what her father commanded, she was very happy! She stood up and called Eliduc and they sat down apart from the others. Both were seized with love.]

When recalled to Brittany by his former king, however, Eliduc does not hesitate to obey, in spite of having to leave his new love behind and break his promises to his new lord. He thus travels back to Brittany and saves his former king from his enemies. Unable to stop thinking about Gilliadun, he returns to England to fetch and bring her back with him to Brittany, in the process betraying the English king. During the journey, Gilliadun finds out that Eliduc is married and falls into a death-like trance. When Guildehuec becomes aware of Gilliadun's condition and her husband's love for her, she feels pity for them, restores Guilliadun to life so she can marry Eliduc, and retires to a convent.

Highly ideological, this tale of preternaturally selfless obedience and service to kingly authority establishes a hierarchy where certain kings and their courts are presented as more desirable than others, and where women are used as payment for military service and are clearly subordinated to the wishes of both kings and their men. Accordingly, the story represents as virtuous and rewards all behavior that upholds and defends the structures of kingly and masculine power, including the rewarding of the heroic warrior with the love of multiple women, the effacing of conflicts of competing desires, and the excusing of the hero's own villainy.

Very significant in the situation, Eliduc is entangled in the dilemmas of service to his former king and duties to his wife in Brittany versus the pursuit of courtly pastimes, including love, and serving a different king in England. His self-serving endeavors are, however, presented as aspects of service to, and de-

signs of, the new king, and are thus justified in terms of the narrative's courtly and chivalric ideologies. Serving those purposes, the chess game provides the framework and setting for the establishing of the love alliance that harmonizes the desires of the English king, of Eliduc, and of the king's daughter, at a moment when she is effectively transferred from man to man, used as a pawn, so to speak, according to the needs of the kingdom.

The setting of the game in the girl's bedroom, in the presence of her father and competing suitors, both of whom are foreign mercenaries, and in the context of an explicit attempt at educating the young woman, ties together the politics of the state, love, and games as aspects of a larger game within which all the protagonists are players and game pieces in the service of larger powers. In that larger game, winners and losers are determined by royal power. Thus, as the king plays chess with the foreign knight, who is accompanied by Gilliadun as if she were a captured game piece, the king is joined by Eliduc, an ally but also a sort of captured piece, and then "defeats" the knight, who loses his prize, Guiliadun, to Eliduc. Eliduc's eventual betrayal of the English king and his journey with Guiliadun from England to Brittany speaks, however, of a similar defeat of the English king, who loses his daughter, his best knight, and the game, to the king of Brittany (cf. Fig 4).

The pleasure of the players while engaged in the structured game, of love or chess, becomes, both in the *Lais* and in Alfonso's *Libro*, the pleasure of the ruler, whose gain is the entire orderly field of gaming and its players, a domain of subjects who compete against one another and make bargains and sacrifices of their own, but whose minds and bodies are at his disposal, to take, use, destroy or distribute to others as he sees fit. One of the ironies of the structured activity by which the ruler contains and controls his subjects, however, is the fact that the ruler himself is a player of a game whose rules ultimately transcend and subject him, just as much as they transcend and subject his own subjects. The rules of the game, the laws at court, the growing abstraction of power exercised by courtly bureaucracies, as well as the impersonality of the laws of demand-and-supply of the then-emerging European market economy created forces and conditions of subjection from which no one could escape, and which were felt very acutely by entitled aristocrats.

Responding to, and participating in, the courtly culture then emerging, the rhetoric and language of William IX's "Ben vueill que sapchon li pluzor" go well beyond sexual braggadocio. As employed in the song, the *ioc/joc* (game) is an image that sheds light on multiple aspects of the courtly life, including not just matters of social life and entertainment – the playing of board games, the courting of ladies, and the composition of songs – but also the complex legal, political, and economic issues that concerned an aristocrat of considerable



Figure 4. Two kings playing the *tablas* game of *Emperador*. Alfonso X, *Libro de achedrex, dados e tablas* (1283). Folio 76r, MS. T.I.6. Biblioteca Real del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial. © Patrimonio Nacional de España.

wealth and power such as William. The song is in effect remarkable for its use of language and expressions associated with commerce, manufacturing, and legal proceedings, as well as the portraying of a situation of intense social, political, and other forms of competition.

Language of economic activity and a competitive ethos are strongly featured in the song and evident from the outset. The speaker boasts of superiority over others in the composition of songs. He asserts, “ieu port d’aicel mestier la flor” (l. 4; I bear the flower in this craft), and, like a merchant peddling his wares in a market, proclaims his works to be of “bona color” (l. 2; good quality), specifying he has manufactured them in his “obrador” (l. 3; workshop):⁴²

⁴² The traditional prize in competitions of various sorts since antiquity, a flower was awarded

Ben vueill que sapchon li pluzor
 d'un vers, s'es de bona color,
 qu'ieu ai trait de mon obrador;
 qu'ieu port d'aicel mestier la flor,
 (ll. 1–4)

[I really want most people to know / about a song, whether it is of good color, / which I
 have brought forth from my workshop; / for I bear the flower in this craft]

The speaker's *mestier*, however, goes beyond poetic craftsmanship. His skills include, he says, the “ioc d'amor” (l. 11; game of love) or “ioc doussa” (l. 30; sweet game), that is, the courting and seduction of ladies, which, in his own characterization, also constitute a craft that can be learned and practiced “en totz mercatz” (l. 42; in all markets):

Dieus en lau e Sanh Iulia,
 tant ai apres del ioc doussa,
 que sobre totz n'ai bona ma;
 ...
 Qu'ieu ai nom maistre certa;
 ia m'amiga n'ueg no-m aura,
 que no-m vueill' aver lendema;
 qu'ieu soi d'aquest mestier, so-m va,
 tan ensenhatz,
 que ben sai guazanhar mon pa
 en totz mercatz.
 (ll. 29–31, 36–42)

[I praise God and Saint Julian, / I have learned so much of the sweet game, / that I have the
 best hand of anyone; / ... / For I am called flawless master; / for a fact, my lady friend will
 not have me a night, / who would not want to have me the next day; / for I am of this craft,
 so it goes with me, / so learned, / that I know well how to earn my bread, / in all markets.]

The boast of skill in song and love draws not only from the language of commerce and manufacturing but also from the rhetoric of law and court procedures, as well as the terminology of feudalism.⁴³ Thus, while speaking about his exper-

to the winners of the Occitan-language literary competition known as the *jocs florals* (floral games), first held in Toulouse in 1324 by the Consistori de la Subregaya Companhia del Gai Saber, and in Catalonia since 1393: Guillaume de Ponsan, *Histoire de l'Académie des jeux floraux* (Toulouse: Bernard Pijon, 1764), 4, 24.

⁴³ Angelica Rieger, “Troubadours and Law: Legal Metaphors in the Autumn of Troubadour Poetry” *Tenso* 26 (2011): 75–87, notes the interplay of feudal and legal terminology in troubadour poetry, though she dates it to a later time: “feudal argumentation developed into legal argumen-

tise in love, the speaker assures his listeners that he can offer “conseill” (l. 32; advice/counsel), a term connected to the obligations of vassals with a duty to advise their lords in political and military matters:⁴⁴

e cel qui conseil me querra,
no l'er vedatz,
ni un de mi non tornara
desconseillatz.
ll. 32–35

[and he who might seek advice from me, it will not be denied to him; no one will go away from me lacking in counsel]

The speaker, furthermore, addresses his audience as if were arguing a case in court (as indeed he was, literally speaking, since he sang his songs at court).⁴⁵ Thus, in support of his claim of excellence in songcraft, he states he can produce an “auctor” (witness) (l. 6), supporting the “vertatz” (truth) (l. 5) of his boasts:

et es vertatz;
e puesc ne trair lo vers auctor,
quant er lassatz.
(ll. 5–7)

[and it is true, / and I can bring forth the song as witness, / when it's laced up]

The expression, “quant er lassatz” (l. 7; when it's laced up) is intriguing. On the level of song-making, Bond notes that the idea of lacing/interlacing is associated with “the linking together of words and melody, or message and form.”⁴⁶ “Las-satz” further refers to the notion of completion, accordingly rendered in MS. D

tation and feudal terminology into legal and penal terminology in the works of the last generations of troubadours, that is, from the last third of the twelfth century on” (77).

⁴⁴ On the feudal connotations of *conseill*, see Jonathan Newman, “Poetic Self-Performance and Political Authority in the *Companho* Lyrics of Guilhem de Peitieu,” *Tenso* 27 (2012): 25–44; here 29–30; Fajardo-Acosta, *Courtly Seductions* (see note 5), 122–123; and Judith Davis, “A Fuller Reading of Guillaume IX's ‘Companho, Faray un vers tot covinen,’” *Romance Notes* 16 (1974): 445–49; here 447–48.

⁴⁵ In the context of the performance of Old French literature and legal procedures of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, R. Howard Bloch noted the close relations of the two: “... the feudal court resembled more than superficially the literary performance. ... The literary performance stood as a sporting version of trial ... the feudal court and the literary performance enjoyed a common and inherently legal function, respectively the articulation and the enforcement of a sanctioned code of conduct ...” (*Medieval French Literature and Law* [see note 5], 3).

⁴⁶ *Poetry of William*, ed. Bond (see note 3), 68.

as “finaz” (finished). The image also suggests the joining together of disparate elements artfully held together, contained, and ready for delivery, as if in a package. The word, in that sense, alludes to the complex meanings of a song that is deliberately crafted – laced, trimmed and primped – in such a way as to convey certain desired meanings and artfully conceal others, a witness that has been carefully prepared before appearing in court.

Line 6, “e puesc ne trair lo vers auctor,” is also rich in ulterior meanings. Taking the “ne” not as *explétif* but as negation, the expression can be interpreted as, “for the song cannot betray its author when it’s laced up.” Just as a carefully coached witness can do service to the party that calls him/her to testify, the song is expected to do its job of steering the audience’s perceptions in certain directions, and preventing it from consideration of other possibilities. While displaying the author’s virtuosity in the crafting of rhetorical objects with double meanings, the expression also emphasizes the speaker’s confidence that his own words will not betray him, that his work is shrewdly crafted and capable of serving his purposes in the tricky social and political environments of court life, where a careless word or indiscreet revelation could cause a singer, a lover, a lord, a vassal, a plaintiff, or a defendant, significant trouble. The courtly life was indeed no trifling matter, and a *faux pas*, such as a poorly worded statement, an obscene or otherwise offensive ditty, or the exposing of a secret, could result in shame and disgrace. Properly veiled and measured language, on the other hand, could be very beneficial, earning a courtier honor and reward.

Though characterized as a *ioc* (game), the courtly life represented in the song is indeed fraught with anxieties and danger, requiring much skill and careful consideration of the potential risks and rewards of every word and action. The composition of songs and the courting ladies, the art of *trobar* and the *ioc d’amor*, are presented as serious matters involving significant dangers for those who engage in them. Success in love is presented, at least in part, as a function of the ability to make appropriate choices from among a number of love games and/or of different ways of playing those games, some of which are judged as better (“meillor”) and others as downright evil (“malvatz”):

e si-m partetz un ioc d’amor,
no soi tan fatz,
no’n sapcha triar lo meillor
d’entre-ls malvatz.
(ll. 11–14)

[and if you propose to me a game of love, I am not so foolish I don’t know how to pick the better from among the evil ones]

The distinction between better and worse games stresses the reality of risks and stakes associated with such games. A foolish lover who chooses poorly can end up suffering losses in various terms, including pleasure and the reputation that comes from the performance or mis-performance of one's *mestier*. Some games, songs, and love affairs are judged as better than others in relation to the good or bad name they can bring to the player/singer/lover within a system of values that defines some forms of behavior as honorable and others as shameful. Some pastimes are looked down as "ioc grossier" (l. 45; foul game).⁴⁷ Others are deemed much more rewarding, "ioc doussa" (l. 30; sweet game). Whether a game is shameful or pleasant and desirable can be determined through "ben sen" (l. 8; good judgment) and "conseill" (l. 32; advice/counsel), that is, in relation to manners of behaving measured by the opinions of others and by shared sets of values. The speaker in the song claims to be well-versed in the making of such discriminations:

Ieu conosc ben sen e folhor,
e conosc anta et honor,
et ai ardiment e paor;
(ll. 8–10)

[I know good sense and folly, and I know shame and honor, and I have courage, but am also afraid]

Respectful fear, awareness of danger, and keen political instincts, particularly shrewdness interpreting the intentions and character of others, are vital to survival in the treacherous social and political settings that the song implies:

Ieu conosc ben cel qui be-m di,
et cel qui-m vol mal atressi,
et conosc ben celui qui-m ri,

⁴⁷ Emil Levy, *Petit Dictionnaire Provençal-Français*, 4th edition (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1966), defines *grosier* as "gros; grossier; menu," that is, "coarse," "vulgar," and "inferior," in keeping with the song's distinctions of games as better or worse, proper or dishonorable, noble or base. The word, however, can also mean "large," "big," "bulky," and can be associated with wealth and power, as in the expression "los grosiers," meaning "the rich," "the grandees." Bond observes that "joc grossier" could refer to a high stakes game (*Poetry of William* [see note 3], 69), though his source lists only the expressions *bon jeu*, *beau gieu*, *lours jeux*, *jouer au fort*, and *joc major* as likely having the sense of "Spiel mit hohem Einsatz" (game of high stakes) (Franz Semrau, *Würfel und Würfelspiel im alten Frankreich*, ed. Gustav Gröber. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, 23 [Halle a. d. S.: Niemeyer, 1910], 81). Bond's observation can, however, be supported by the interpretation of the lady's demand for the doubling of the size of the *datz* as a call for the increasing of the game's stakes, as discussed later in this essay.

et cels qui s'azauton de mi
 conosc assatz;
 qu'atressi dei voler lor fi,
 et lor solatz.
 (ll. 15–21)

[I know well he who speaks well of me, and he who wishes me ill also; and I know well he who laughs at me, and those who take pleasure in me, I know them well enough; and so I should wish their peace and their happiness]

The speaker here boasts of his ability to judge character and to interpret the true intentions of others, beyond the appearances of their own crafty words. That skill reinforces his sense of the need for caution and of keeping up appearances. Thus, though knowing that not everyone wishes him well, the speaker settles in this passage for, at least on the surface, politely wishing “peace and happiness” to both friends and enemies. The word “fi” (l. 20) is, as above, often and appropriately translated as “peace.”⁴⁸ Its primary meaning, however, is “end,” which can refer to various kinds of endings, including death. The word “fi” means “peace,” then, but only as a derivation from the idea of death, the peaceful rest of the grave. In this case, wishing someone “peace” can also mean wishing them dead. Lines 20–21, thus, beyond their polite exterior, sort out and apportion the speaker’s wishes for enemies and friends respectively: “and so I should wish their peace [i.e. the death of enemies] and their happiness [i.e. the well-being of friends].” The expression of such feelings not only reveals the intensity of the competition at court but the extreme animosity between rivals. The fact that someone’s death has to be wished for in veiled language, on the other hand, points to the limitations of the power of the speaker, who is far from being able to openly express or realize his wishes, and who has to settle for expressing his anxieties and frustrations by composing and singing obscene songs.

Resentment, frustration, and hostility toward rivals are evident in multiple aspects of the song. Facing the strictures of codes of morality, courtly manners, laws, rivals and other limitations of his power, the speaker is put in the uncomfortable position of having to secure the support and agreement of others in matters that he would most likely prefer to adjudicate himself. In that respect, the song is contradictory in its double character as boast and appeal to an audience for judgment on the quality of work that the speaker himself considers, without question, of the highest quality. That discomfort is manifest in a song he claims

48 “That I should likewise want their peace” (*Poetry of William*, ed. Bond [see note 3], 25). Bartsch, *Chrestomathie* (see note 3), col. 550.

to be of “bona color,” which he full-well knows to be entirely off-color and a deliberate attempt to offend the sensibilities of others who may perceive his activities as “grossier” (coarse/foul/crude/vulgar) or otherwise “malvatz” (evil). While awarding himself in advance “la flor” of the poetic art, he crafts verses meant to flout any standards of taste or judgment. Addressing only “li pluzor,” he seeks to shame and intimidate, as a minority voice, those who might disagree with him. And “li pluzor” will have no choice but to judge in his favor since he claims his merit is “vertatz” (truth). The case is thus decided even before the audience has a chance to reply, which renders the question moot. The song, furthermore, for all its boasting, proves not the speaker’s superiority over others but only that he has no choice but to engage in competition and, at least rhetorically, to acknowledge values, opinions and subject positions that he would rather dismiss. The situation speaks, in effect, of the reality of opposing views, of other claims and foes effectively contesting the superiority of the speaker, for whom having to compete for his privileges appears odious but unavoidable.

The claim to ability and mastery in so many different endeavors is significant and symptomatic of the growing complexity of life at the courts of the High Middle Ages. The boast of *mestier* in so many different activities expresses indeed a preoccupation relevant to a ruler like William, forced to attend to multiple and complicated problems and having to demonstrate mastery and dominance in every case and situation facing him. Pasero noticed the underlying tension but chose to efface it by claiming that *mestier* was to be understood not as specialization but as *Kunstfertigkeit*, the ability to craft a finished product (159). That argument, however, bypasses the problem that a *mestier* is a set of specific skills delimited and honed by practice and specialization. A finished product in that sense, especially one as varied and complex as William claims to be able to craft, is the result of a significant division of labor and exchange involving the contributions of many different specialized agents – poets, musicians, singers, clerks, scribes, orators, craftspeople, merchants – not of the mastery of all crafts by one individual claiming superiority over everyone in every field of activity. The boast in that sense is the expression of the anxieties faced by individuals forced to claim excellence in multiple activities, in an attempt to justify power and privileges continuously being contested by others in the highly competitive environments of the courts.

In addition to the very multiplicity of skills that the speaker claims for himself, what is peculiar about the characterization of his supposed talents is the contrast between the boastful attitude and the humble roles that he assumes in his impersonation of working people, merchants, vassals and individuals pleading a case in court. As a high-ranking aristocrat William would be more familiar with the roles of lord and ruler, judge in legal proceedings, and certainly

not someone having to make a living by engaging in manufacturing or commercial work. Pasero noted that the allusions and metaphors of the text draw from “un mondo in realtà del tutto estraneo a Guglielmo ... altre sfere sociali, che – per la via della trasposizione o della parodia, o anche semplicemente attraverso la messa in contrasto fra realtà opposte – vengono poste al servizio degli enunciati della sua ideologia” (a world in reality entirely alien to William, ... other social spheres, which, by way of transposition or parody, or simply by contrast with the opposite reality, are used to support his ideology).⁴⁹ That William perceived such language and metaphors as capable of supporting his positions, however, strongly suggests the rising importance of many sorts of people and activities that could not be ignored, even by very powerful lords, who felt compelled to acknowledge and incorporate them in the construction of their own identities. The song in effect is strongly suggestive of the beleaguered situation of aristocrats having to justify their privileges, through a hyperbolic rhetoric of identification with their subjects, betraying their own gradual disempowerment and the growing complexity of the politics, societies and economies of the High Middle Ages.

Nowhere are the limitations and contradictions of the speaker’s situation more evident than in his admission, in the critically important stanza VII, of his inability to play the love game at which he claims to excel:

Pero no-m auzetz tan guabier,
 qu’ieu no fos rahuzatz l’autrier,
 que iogava un ioc grossier,
 que-m fo trop bos al cap premier,
 tro fui taulatz;
 quan-m gardei, no ai plus mestier;
 si-m fo camjatz.
 (ll. 43–49)

[But don’t hear me so boastful that I was not refused the other day, as I played a foul game, that was very pleasant at first, till I was laid on the table; when I looked at myself, I had no more craft; so it had changed for me]

The *ioc* here is literally a board game but also represents a sexual encounter during which the speaker, much to his surprise and contrary to what he claims to be his usual masterful performance, experiences impotence. The event is described in terms of an unspecified game, defined only as “grossier,” which proceeds well

⁴⁹ Pasero, *Guglielmo IX* (see note 3), 159–60.

until the speaker, or the game itself, is *taulatz/entaulatz* (set on a table).⁵⁰ In literal terms, this could refer to the ending of a match in a game of questionable repute, such as the dice game of *Azar*, resulting in a defeat for the speaker.⁵¹ The terms, however, also suggest a change of game, of game arena, or of the situation/position of the speaker. Metaphorically, this could be interpreted as the relocation of the players to a bed or cushion, after foreplay, on which the love-making is supposed to take place. Literally, on the other hand, the table terminology suggests that the “ioc grossier” has been replaced by a more refined and sophisticated form of entertainment involving additional devices such as a gaming board.⁵² The tables are thus “camjatz” (changed), turned on him, so to speak, and the speaker loses his confidence and his *mestier*.

The fact that the game, or the speaker, is *taulatz/entaulatz* redefines and restarts the game in a way that is unfamiliar to him and that suggests a new order of things, a new set of rules and game devices. The Occitan nouns *taula/taulas* and *taulier*, are defined as “table, planche, ais” (table, board, plank), and, by extension, “jeu de tables”; “table de jeu de trictrac” (game of tables/backgammon, game board used in backgammon).⁵³ The verbs *taular* and *entaular* correspond to the ideas of “jouer au jeu de tables” (to play the game of tables/backgammon) and “mettre sur table” (to place on a table), respectively.⁵⁴ Levy further specifies *taular* and *entaular* as “disposer, commencer (un jeu)” (to set up, to begin [a game]), but notes that *entaular* can also mean “... engager (un procès)” (to engage/initiate [a process]), and *entaulamen* can refer to the “... arrangement, disposition (des figures d’un jeu)” (arrangement, positioning [of a game’s pieces]).⁵⁵

50 MSS. C and E have “fuy taulatz” (f. 230v) and “fui entaulatz” (f. 114; I was laid on the table), whereas D and N read “fo ... taulaz” (f. 198r) and “fo taulatz” (ff. 229v, 234r; it was laid on the table) (see note 28).

51 Alfonso X describes dice games, like *Azar* and *Triga*, as forms of entertainment associated with crude and unruly people, mostly of lower classes, and significantly less worthy than chess or backgammon, due to the fact that they involve only *ventura* (luck) and not *seso* (reason). Illustrations of such games in the *Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas* (see note 30) show semi-nude and quarrelsome players who have irresponsibly gambled away all their possessions (e.g. f. 67r): Fajardo-Acosta, “The King is Dead” (see note 29), 494–96.

52 Though often played on plain wooden boards, dice games did not require any special equipment beyond the dice themselves (Alfonso X, *Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas* [see note 30], ff. 65r–71v). *Tablas* was Alfonso’s favorite game and the one he considered most appropriated for noble, educated, and refined players, though he also valued chess very highly: Fajardo-Acosta, “The King is Dead” (see note 29), 498.

53 Levy, *Petit Dictionnaire* (see note 47), 358–59. *Taulier* has also the meaning of “tablier” (apron) (Bartsch, *Chrestomathie* [see note 3], col. 644).

54 Bartsch, *Chrestomathie* (see note 3), cols. 534, 644.

55 Levy, *Petit Dictionnaire* (see note 47), 152–53, 358.

The words suggest then not only the initializing and setting in motion of a game, or a legal proceeding, but also the setting up and arrangement of the game pieces on a board. In that sense, *taulatz/entaulatz* suggest the start of a new game which is not identical with the preceding “ioc grossier,” but rather follows and modifies it, making it more orderly and also more refined.

The words *taula/taulas* and *taulier*, furthermore, also referred to written documents and media used for writing: “tablettes à écrire,” “liste,” “registre,” “tablette (pour y mettre des livres)” [writing tablets, list, record, bookshelf] < Latin *tabula* = “writing tablet,” “record,” “listing,” “document.”⁵⁶ As a writing tool, the *tabula*, *tabella*, or *tabellula* was “a thin hollowed slab made of wood or sometimes ivory, filled with a layer of beeswax to form a surface for writing,” used throughout the Middle Ages both for learning the craft of writing, exchanging personal communications, and for drafting of documents prior to their being transcribed to parchment.⁵⁷ The tablets were often dyptichs (*duae tabulae*) and even polyptychs, with the *folia* or *paginulae* (leaves, pages) held together by laces (*corrigiae*) forming hinges between them (*junctura corrigiarum*). The stylus (*graphium*) was made of wood or other materials and sometimes equipped with a *ferrum* (iron tip), a term that was also used to refer to the stylus as a whole.

Not surprising given the associations of the terminology in William’s song, “an unusually large proportion of the vocabulary associated with wax tablets is ... figurative, even fanciful.” Rouse and Rouse note, in particular, metaphors of carving (*sculpere*), molding (*effigiare*), and plowing (*exarare*).⁵⁸ They also observed that, at least since Jerome’s *Vulgate*, and throughout the Middle Ages, the *tabulae* had ties to the biblical text, religious law, and codes of morality: “... daboque tibi tabulas lapideas et legem ac mandata quae scripsi ut doceas eos” (*Exodus* 24.12; and I will give you stone tablets and the law and the commandments that I have written so that you may teach them).⁵⁹

56 Levy, *Petit Dictionnaire* (see note 47), 358–59.

57 Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, “The Vocabulary of Wax Tablets,” *Harvard Library Bulletin*. New Series 1.3 (1990): 12–19; here 12. Rouse and Rouse proposed that the English word “book” may have been influenced by the *buxum* (boxwood) from which the tablets were commonly made and which was also used, metonymically, to refer to them (13).

58 Rouse and Rouse, “Vocabulary” (see note 57), 12, 13–15, 17–18.

59 Rouse and Rouse, “Vocabulary” (see note 57), 18–19. *The Vulgate Bible*, vol. I, *The Pentateuch*, ed. Swift Edgar. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 404. Written law recording established legal usage, the *costumas* or *coutumiers*, date back to the early twelfth century: “While the literary and legal languages of poem and customal seem to be unconnected, they are, in fact, surprisingly similar. Both can be situated within the context of a preexisting Latin tradition. The early French text appeared against the background of a continuous production of Latin works; the secular court functioned alongside

Building on those ideas, Gerald Bond observed that tablets, during the courtly ages, were equally strongly tied to notions of poetic composition, games, and very close personal relationships. Bond emphasized the close connections between the wax tablets employed in the composition of lyric poetry and the Neo-Ovidian culture of *amor/amicitia* (love/friendship) and *iocus* (game) that developed among clerics of the so-called Loire/Angers School, like Baudri of Bourgueil, Marbod of Rennes, and Hildebert de Lavardin, both prior to and contemporaneously with the work of William. In that context, the writing tablets became synonymous with the social game centered on the writing of verses and the transmission of expressions of affection between friends/lovers:

As all students of Baudri have realized, the exchange among friends of tablets or parchment containing verses constitutes the essence of his notion of *iocus* – if one excludes for the moment the amatory implications of the word. Ludic terminology abounds in his poems, in unusual forms and unlikely contexts that confuse the unaccustomed reader. One finds not only *iocus*, the Classical word for play or game of the mind, but also *ludus*, the word designating primarily physical (including erotic) games.⁶⁰

The sophistication of the courtly love culture that William inaugurated was then already an aspect of a Latin clerical culture, inspired by the Cluniac and Gregorian reforms, and flourishing among poets in the Benedictine monasteries of Anjou and elsewhere, as well as at the papal and imperial courts, where, as noted by Reto Bezzola, the rhetoric of courtly love was anticipated by the epistolary exchanges between Peter Damian and Empress Agnes (William's aunt), the wife of Holy Roman Emperor Henry III and mother of Henry IV:

Il n'est toutefois pas sans importance de savoir que la veuve de Guillaume V, Hermensende, se retira auprès de l'impératrice Agnès, sa belle-soeur, et à Rome, où ces deux princesses de la maison de Poitou subissent le charme de l'amitié spirituelle que sut susciter en elles un Pierre Damien. Dans les lettres de Pierre Damien à l'impératrice Agnès, cette amitié prenait, à travers une interprétation mystico-érotique de certaines passages de la Sainte Écriture, ce caractère d'union des âmes qui, tout en faisant sentir la douceur d'une telle communauté entre deux êtres mortels, ne diminuait pas leur aspiration mystique vers Dieu.⁶¹

[It is not, in any case, without importance to know that the widow of William V (Count of Poitiers, VII Duke of Aquitaine and uncle of William IX), Hermensende, retired to Rome,

and sometimes even along with its ecclesiastical counterpart, possessed of written canonical collections throughout the Middle Ages" (Bloch, *Medieval French Literature and Law* [see note 5], 4).

⁶⁰ Bond, *Loving Subject* (see note 5), 53–55.

⁶¹ Reto R. Bezzola, "Guillaume IX et les origines de l'amour courtois," *Romania* 66 (1940–1941): 145–237; here 165–66.

together with her sister-in-law, the Empress Agnes (William IX's aunt), where the two princesses of the House of Poitou experienced the charm of the spiritual friendship that a certain Peter Damian knew how to elicit in them. In the letters of Peter Damian to Empress Agnes, this friendship took, through mystical-erotic interpretation of certain passages of Holy Scripture, the character of a union of souls that, while allowing the enjoyment of the sweetness of such a community between two mortal beings, did not diminish their mystical aspiration toward God]

The prototypes of the courtly pastimes at William's court can then be seen to have been aspects of practices associated with monastic and political life in an era of reform and regulation when secular rulers and the Church were expanding their power, working out alliances, subduing rivals, and attempting to organize the lives of Europeans into cohesive kingdoms and empires, united by faith and by courtly/chivalric ideals, and thus capable of large-scale enterprises like the crusades.

In that context, the "ioc grossier," the dirty old game to which the speaker in William's song was accustomed, can be interpreted as the former rights of an independent lord to do what he liked and to take what he wanted and when he wanted it, without having to offer explanations to anyone. The "ioc doussa," however, the new game lords like William faced involved the acquisition of education and refinement, the transformation of rude local bullies into loving vassals and servants of love, subjects of the game, game pieces placed on a board and controlled by someone, or something, else positioned at higher levels in the hierarchies of the time. Accordingly, the grammatical constructions in Stanza VII, where the change of game is described, are notable for placing the subject in passive and reflexive, object positions: "qu'ieu no fos rahuzatz" (that I was not refused), "que·m fo tro bos" (that was very pleasant to me), "fui taulatz" (I was laid on the table), "quan·m gardei" (when I looked at myself), "si·m fo camjatz" (so it had changed for me). The speaker, in a significant way, has been disempowered and reduced to the position of a passive object of interactions where he used to be the active agent – a detached observer of his own powerlessness ("quan·m gardei no ai plus mestier" (when I looked at myself, I had no more craft) vis-à-vis emerging laws, manners, protocols, sensibilities, and rules obtaining at court, in the market, and in the bedroom.

In those emerging circumstances, the winners and losers of the game are determined by procedures, not the will of individuals. The courtly lady the speaker faces in the game of love is his equal on a field leveled by rules and structures such as the *taulier*. She is, furthermore, not easily satisfied and certainly not willing to sell herself short or enable a courtier's desire just because he demands it. He is in fact required to follow a protocol and observe the steps of a bargaining procedure, the playing of a new game according to new rules that might result in

the attainment of the desired reward. The lady thus chastises the speaker, pointing out to him the problem with his game:

Mas elha-m dis un reprovier:
 “Don, vostres datz son menudier,
 et ieu revit vos a doblie” (ll. 50–52)

[But she spoke to me a reproach: “Sir, your dice are too small, and I challenge you to double them”]

The metaphor of the “datz ... menuder” is transparently crude in its anatomical referents, but bio-politically significant, and puzzling as to the devices and procedures of the board game being played. Metaphorically, the small dice represent on objectification of the speaker’s body parts, which are judged inadequate and in need of enhancement. On the level of the literal game, the lady appears impatient with the pace, the payoffs, or the manner in which her opponent is playing the game. One possibility is that her rival is using dice of different physical sizes from those to which she is accustomed. Dice in effect could be of different dimensions, according to the place of their manufacture.⁶² They could also have more than six faces, as in the octahedral and heptahedral dice discussed by Alfonso X in the *Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas* (ff. 83r–84r) – though such devices were used only in unusual games like the *Grant Açedrex* (f. 81r–82r) and the *Tablas por Astronomía* (f. 97r).⁶³ Six-sided devices were the norm in most games of dice, like *azar*, and of *tablas*, but, as Alfonso notes, they had to be of the same size, as using dice of different sizes was a way of cheating:

E dezimos que an de seer tres figuras quadradas de seys cantos eguales tamanno ell uno como ell otro en grandez. & en igualdad de la quadra. ca ssi en otra manera fuesse no carerie tan bien duna parte como dotra. & serie enganno mas que uentura. E por ende esta es la una; de las maneras de enganno; como diremos adelante; con que fazen los dados engannosos aquellos que quieren engannar con ellos.⁶⁴

[And we say that the dice should be three square pieces of six equal sides, each of the same size and equality of squareness, because if it were otherwise they would not fall as well on

⁶² Semrau, *Würfel und Würfelspiel* (see note 47), notes that dice made in different regions could vary in sizes according to local measures and customs. The dice considered valid in one region could be deemed inappropriate in another (28–29).

⁶³ Another variation that could account for the lady’s frustration is the form of the game known as *ad fallum*: “if the players had agreed to play *ad fallum* (MF. *jouer a la faille*, also used figuratively), inability to use any throw involved the immediate loss of the game” (Murray, “Medieval Game” [see note 29], 59). Alfonso calls this game *fallas* (*Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas* [see note 30], f. 74v).

⁶⁴ Ed. Sánchez-Prieto et al. (see note 30), f. 65r.

one side as on another and that would be deception rather than luck. And besides this is one of the manners of cheating, as we will discuss further, by which deceivers who want to trick others make false dice]

Rather than the physical size of the dice, however, the lady's call could be referring to the number of dice used or of points produced by a given roll, both of which would affect the pace and the stakes of the game. A game indeed could be accelerated by adding points to the original throw of two dice, by a supplementary throw, or by playing with three dice.⁶⁵ As Alfonso notes, several different games of *tablas* could be played with two or three dice.⁶⁶ Just as using dice of different sizes, however, playing with more than two dice was often associated with dishonesty, moral dissipation, and even heresy. Following the suggestions of Camille Chabaneau, Jeanroy noted those associations in Peire Cardenal's "Un estribot farai, que er mot maistratz" (I will make an *estribot* that will be very artificial)⁶⁷:

Si avetz bela femna o es homs molheratz,
els seran cobertor, sie-us peza o sie-us platz;
e cant els son desus e-ls con son sagelatz
ab las bolas redondas que pendon als matratz,
com las letras son clauzas e lo traucs es serratz,
d'aqui eyson l'iretge e li essabatatz,⁶⁸
que iuron e renegon e iogon a tres datz:

⁶⁵ "All forms of tables were played with the help of dice, some games requiring three and others two dice. It would seem, however, that three dice were not always available, in which case different ways of obtaining the third throw were adopted. Sometimes an invariable throw of 6 was added to those obtained from two dice, sometimes the opponent was allowed to choose the third throw. ... in majoret the higher of the throws of two dice was duplicated, in minoret the lower throw" (Murray, "Medieval Game" [see note 29], 59).

⁶⁶ The *tablas* game known as *Medio Emperador*, for example, "iuegasse con dos dados o con tres" (*Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas* [see note 30], f. 76r) (is played with two dice or with three), the same being true of other games, like *Pareia de entrada* (f. 76v) and *Cab & quinal* (f. 77r).

⁶⁷ Pillet and Carstens, *Bibliographie der Troubadours* (see note 3), 335.64. Song 64 in Peire Cardenal, *Il trovatore Peire Cardenal*, ed. Sergio Vatteroni. 2 vols. Studi, testi e manuali: Collana di Filologia romanza fondata da Aurelio Roncaglia, New Series Vol. 17. Subsidia al Corpus des troubadours, New Series Vol. 12 (Modena: Mucchi, 2013), 2: 753–64. Song 34 in *Poésies complètes du troubadour Peire Cardenal (1180–1278)*, ed. René Lavaud. Bibliothèque méridionale, 2nd Series, Vol. 34 (Toulouse: Édouard Privat, 1957), 206–15.

⁶⁸ The word *essabatatz* refers to Waldensian heretics who were known as *sabatati* or *insabatati*, after "the sandals which they wore in imitation of the apostles" (James Craigie Robertson, *History of the Christian Church. Vol III. (A.D. 1122–1303)* [London: James Murray, 1866], 205).

aiso fan monge negre en loc de caritatz.
(ll. 26–33)

[if you have a beautiful woman where a man is married, they (monks) will be her cover, whether you like it or not; and when they are on top and her pudendum is stoppered with the round balls that hang from the spear, when the letters are sealed and the hole is filled, it is from here that issue heretics and dissolutes, who swear and blaspheme and play with three dice: that is what black monks do instead of charity].

While Alfonso seems to excuse the use of three dice in many games, his laws regulating gambling houses, the *Ordenamiento de las tafurerías*, very explicitly condemn the use of four or more dice as a form of *furto* (theft, robbery):

Aquellos que metieren a juego e jugaren con dados que ayan nombre los cuatro, porque es furto manifesto, que pechen por la primera vez todo aquello que jugaren doblado a su dueño e costas e misiones ... e aquellos que jugaren con dados que ayan nombre seis o siete o con otros dados que ayan de más o de menos en sus suertes que ayan la pena que deven haber los que jugaren con los dados que han nombre de cuatro, porque es otrosí furto manifesto. (Ley II)⁶⁹

[Those who introduce into a game or play with four dice, which clearly is robbery, let them pay to the owner, the first time, double the amount they wagered, in addition to costs and compensation for errands ... and those who play with six or seven dice, or with other any other number of dice that may alter the outcomes of a game, let them have as punishment the same as those who play with four dice, because that is also open robbery]

Alfonso's concern with theft suggests the number of dice used in a game was indeed tied to the payoffs of the game. Modern backgammon is played with two dice but can employ a third one, called a doubling cube, which is used by players to increase the stakes of the game. A player can accept an offer to double the stakes, in which case s/he places the doubling cube on his/her side of the board. This is very similar to the situation in William's song, as the lady challenges her opponent to precisely such a doubling of values, "ieu revit vos a doblier" (l. 52), that appear to relate not only to the speed of the game but also the amounts wagered by the players, her potential gain. Additional dice used to increase payoffs could then be related to high-stakes gaming resulting in very heavy losses and very large gains, hence the concern with the regulation of their number in Alfonso's laws.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ *Ordenamiento de las Tafurerías*, ed. Orellana Calderón (see note 30), 380–81.

⁷⁰ The raising of the stakes would seem to support Bond's observation that "a *joc grossier* is a game played for high stakes" (*Poetry of William* [see note 3], 69), but does not explain why the game would be considered high stakes prior to the increase that the lady desires.

Agreeing to a more aggressive, higher stakes and/or faster game, the speaker accepts the challenge of the lady by using three dice:

dis ieu: “qui-m dava Monpeslier,
no’n er laissatz”;
e levei un pauc son taulier
ab ams mos bratz.

E quan l’aic levat lo taulier,
enpeis los datz;
e-l dui foron cara meiller,
e-l tertz plombatz.

E fis fort ferir al taulier,
e fon iogatz.

(ll. 53–62)

[I said, ‘Even if someone gave me Montpellier, this challenge will not be refused’ And I lifted her table a little, with both my arms. And when I had lifted the table, I cast the dice; the two showed better faces, the third was loaded. And I struck hard at the table, and it was played]

Better numbers on the original two dice – “cara meiller” (better faces) – plus the introduction of a third die (apparently a device similar to a doubling cube), are the factors that allow the game to take place. The third die, however, is said to be *plombatz*, that is, literally loaded with lead on one side so as to bias the outcome, and is therefore an indication of cheating.⁷¹ The use of *datz plombatz* or *dados plumados* is explicitly proscribed in Alfonso’s laws: “E el que metiere o jugare con dados plumados nin desvenados que peche por la primera vez todo aquello que ganare doblado a su dueño e costas e misiones” (whoever might introduce, or play with, loaded dice or dice that have been hollowed, let him pay to the owner, the first time, double what he won, plus other costs and compensation for errands).⁷² The speaker’s response to the challenge of the lady – which in itself is a call for the modification of the terms of the game in ways that could be deemed questionable – is to submit to her conditions

71 Semrau, *Würfel und Würfelspiel* (see note 47), 109.

72 Yet another way of modifying dice to cause them to yield biased outcomes was to shave off parts of the die, thus altering the distribution of its weight. Alfonso calls these “dados afeitados”: *Ordenamiento de las Tafurerías*, ed. Orellana Calderón (see note 30), Ley II, 381. On the various ways of modifying dice for cheating purposes, see Semrau, *Würfel und Würfelspiel* (see note 47), 29–32.

but also to resist them by the introduction of a cheating device that biases the outcomes in his favor.⁷³

Interestingly then, the speaker's participation in the game is accompanied by awareness of his own shortcomings and numerous indications of unwillingness to play by rules that limit his power and prospects of gain. The speaker is, in a sense, entirely conscious of the emptiness of his boasts and of the compromises that the game requires. To be able to play the *ioc doussa*, he has to submit to rules, or cheat, so as to be able to have his cake and eat it too. The latter however turns out not to be an option, as playing the game at all is in itself an acceptance of its opportunity cost, the engagement in an activity and the necessary neglect of others, the practice of a particular *mestier*, and not of others. Playing the game, even while cheating, commits the individual to terms of identity and engagement that cannot be avoided, subjecting the players to the consequences of playing in ways proscribed for specific reasons, such as the possibility of staggering losses and unfair apportionments of gains. And even as they circumvent the strictures of the game by cheating devices intended to increase their own pleasure/gains, players themselves contribute to the evolution of the rules, so that, for example, a treatise on games composed in the following century discusses new types of dice with seven and eight faces and speaks of using three dice being just as acceptable as using only two. Cheating in that sense does not deny or undermine the game but only makes it become more complex and demanding, and gives it greater power over those who play it.

Thus, to play a game always involves a cost resulting from its underlying economy of powers, or *mestiers*. The exclamation, “qui-m dava Monpeslier, / no'n er laissatz” (ll. 53–54; Even if someone gave me Montpellier, I would not refuse), is a boast that dramatizes the speaker's determination to face the challenges of the love game and make the necessary sacrifices. It asserts, tongue-in-cheek, the willingness of the speaker to forgo very substantial economic and political gains – control and ownership over the rich city of Montpellier – in exchange for the ability to play the game. Albeit purely rhetorical, the phrase is not without consequence, as it makes a trade-off explicit and declares a choice, which leads to their performance on the board and on the lady's body, not to the possession of Montpellier. The verbal acceptance of the challenge, in effect, is followed by his gingerly lifting her *taulier* (“gaming table”; Levy, 359) and “apron” (Bartsch, 644), “un pauc” (a little bit), “ab ams mos bratz” (with both of my arms), and then casting the dice. At that moment, acting in a focused

73 Bond observes that the lifting of her *taulier*, understood as her side of the game board, would also be a sign of cheating: *Poetry of William* (see note 3), 70.

and deliberate manner, the formerly boastful and unruly player of the *ioc grossier* is seen surrendering to the demands of the new game – one requiring significantly more *cortesia* – and hence being rewarded with the return of his sexual *mestier*, though, by the necessities of opportunity cost, at the expense of his political and economic one.

Being able to play a game, on the other hand, is not the same as winning it. The expression that concludes the song, “e fon iogatz” (and it was played) is quite ambiguous regarding the outcomes of the game.⁷⁴ The Occitan verb *iogar/jogar* (to play) and its past participle *iogatz/jogatz* (< Latin *iocari/jocari* [to joke, to make merry]) are very rich and strongly evocative of a number of ideas connected not only to the completion of the game and the sexual act, but also to notions of the lying down of the players in submission to the rules and structures of the game. *Iogar* and *iogatz* in effect resonate with the descendants of Latin *iacere* and *iacitus* (to lie down).

In Occitan, the infinitive of this latter verb takes forms like *jazer/jazir* (past participle: *jazut* or *jagut*) which Levy defines as “coucher; être couché, se reposer; se trouver, être; être écrit, être contenu” (to go to bed; to be in bed, to rest; to find oneself [in a given circumstance or position], to be; to be written, to be contained) – also used in expressions with clearly sexual meanings, like “se jazer ab” (coucher avec/to sleep with someone) and “jazer en pecat” (pécher/to lie in sin). The interacting echoes of *jogar* and *jazer* are also to be seen in forms of Old Spanish like the verb *yogar*: “holgarse, y particularmente tener acto carnal” (to disport oneself, and particularly to partake in the sexual act; *Diccionario*, Real Academia Española).

The interplay of the concepts behind the Occitan verbs *jogar* and *jazer*, however, also suggests notions of the surrender of the individual, a “lying down” of the self in submission to a ludic and political order that delivers pleasure and honor, but only in exchange for subjection to its rules. Under those rules, the ultimate outcome of the game is, in fact, uncertain – the closing words giving no hint as to who “wins” the game, beyond whatever pleasure or sense of personal accomplishment and identity the players might have derived from the activity. The speaker’s failure to claim unequivocal victory, especially given his boastful disposition, suggests, if not a failure, at least a not unambiguous outcome – a regaining of his manhood but only at a cost measured in terms of submission

⁷⁴ Semrau, *Würfel und Würfelspiel* (see note 47), 82, suggests *jogatz* could be interpreted as the idea of the game having been “won” but, even if the expression is understood as “it was won,” it still does not make clear *who* was the winner.

to laws and regulations, that is, of the sacrifice of his political and personal autonomy.

The expression “e fon iogatz” in effect evokes, in its indeterminacy and impersonality, the primacy of fateful, aleatory, legal, and other forces in the determination of the game and its outcomes – large and formidable powers clearly exceeding and transcending those of the individual. By agreeing to play the game, the player also agrees to its rules and outcomes, which cannot be questioned, appealed or reversed once the game has started. That is the sense of the modern croupier’s expression in the roulette game, “les jeux sont faits, rien ne va plus” (the bets are made, nothing more allowed), as the ball is set in motion, the betting is closed, and nothing can be added to, or withdrawn from, the amounts wagered.⁷⁵ Caesar’s *alea jacta est* (the die is cast) marks a similar moment of submission of the individual to impersonal forces, in that case, as in William’s, also associated with the evolution of political power.⁷⁶ Rather than accidents of rhetoric, the game-related language and imagery by which Caesar’s momentous decision is remembered, and by which William caps the narrative of his sexual conquest, constitute reminders of the specific ways in which individuals experience and conceptualize the phenomenon of a growing political and economic power that is both seductive and sinister.

Promising pleasure, a sense of identity and belonging, as well as the possibility of other rewards, such powers lure individuals into a high-stakes game where players enjoy the subjectivity of winners, while the only objective winner is the game itself. The surrender to those forces, on the other hand, is not experienced by the subject as the reality of loss and disempowerment but only as the

⁷⁵ I’m grateful to Albrecht Classen for bringing to my attention the resemblance of William’s phrase, “e fon iogatz,” to the expression, “les jeux sont faits,” in the game of roulette, and to the situation in *Carmina Burana* 185, “Ich was ein chint so wolgetan,” where a scoundrel leads a young girl astray by proposing, “ludum faciamus!” (let us play a game!), only to rape and betray her, concluding his misdeed with the expression, “ludus compleatur!” (“the game is done!”): Albrecht Classen, *Sexual Violence and Rape in the Middle Ages: A Critical Discourse in Premodern German and European Literature*. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture 7 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 113–23; *Carmina Burana*, ed. Vollmann (see note 12 in Classen, “Introduction,” in this volume).

⁷⁶ The expression is attributed to Julius Caesar at a critical moment in his political and military career, when, in January of 49 B.C., he ordered the troops of the XIII Legion under his command to cross the Rubicon River: “Eatur,” inquit, ‘quo deorum ostenta et inimicorum iniquitas vocat. Iacta alea est’” (“So it goes,” he said, “as the signs of the gods and the iniquity of enemies demand. The die is cast”); Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum: Divus Julius* I: 32; *The Lives of the Caesars*, ed. Maximilian Ihm, trans. J. C. Rolfe, 2 vols. Loeb Classical Library, 31, 38 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 44.

possibility of winning, "... of being rewarded by fate, of having seized control of destiny." Conversely, "the factor of danger, which is the most important factor in gambling, alongside pleasure (the pleasure of betting on the right number) ... arises not so much from the threat of losing as from that of *not winning*. The particular danger that threatens the gambler lies in the fateful category of arriving 'too late,' of having 'missed the opportunity.'"⁷⁷ For the subjects of a game, then, the only and greatest fear is freedom, being excluded from the game and liberated from its strictures, and having to define one's own identity and purpose.

In that sense, William's song can be understood as a cultural product dramatizing the loss of *poder*, the failed *mestier*, of independent lords resisting assimilation to the complex hierarchies of power and legal structures that developed in Western Europe during the High Middle Ages. Metaphorically represented by courtly games, such powers and structures promised the return of the individual's *poder*, *mestier*, and corresponding self-esteem, but only in exchange for obedience to the social proprieties and political forms of the courtly life. Facing such a situation, the subject in/of the song cannot regain his manhood until he accepts the lady's chastisement and correction. It is only the lady's educational admonition, a *reprovier* analogous to the *conseill* the song offers to would-be lovers, that allows for the game to be played, not as *ioc grossier* but as *ioc doussa*, the *ioc d'amor* where the individual's *poder/mestier* depends no longer on his own daring and bravado, the qualities of an independent lord, but on the observance

77 Walter Benjamin, "Notes on a Theory of Gambling," *Selected Writings*, vol. 2: 1927–1934, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone and others (Cambridge, MA, and London: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 1999), 297–98; here 298; originally, *Gesammelte Schriften 2: Aufsätze, Essays, Vorträge*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (1977; Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1989). Miles F. Loggie kindly pointed out to me these passages in the work of Benjamin. Cf. Ralph Ellison's short story, "King of the Bingo Game," *Tomorrow* 4 (November 1944), 29–33, where a black American protagonist tries to seize his "opportunity" by playing Bingo but, in the course of the game, realizes his enslavement, gives himself a name, and discovers that the game must be prevented from continuing if he and others are ever to be free from the system that oppresses them. The story has an intriguing "courtly love" element in the fact that the protagonist is gambling so he can save his wife's life, who is named Laura, not accidentally, after Petrarch's beloved. The work of Ellison has attracted the attention of game theorists, e.g., Diane Long Hoeveler, "Game Theory and Ellison's *King of the Bingo Game*," *The Journal of American Culture* 15.2 (1992), 39–42, who notes that "the urge to escape into a fantasy realm, the realization that one has nothing to lose, the fear that one can never win because the odds are hopeless, all of these gaming motifs function throughout Black literature, but most blatantly in Ellison's early short story ..." (39).

of rules that subject him to a *poder* much greater than his own, thus bringing him under the rule of law.⁷⁸

One of the most substantial sacrifices that have to be made, in order to participate in a game, is that of personal identity and autonomy. Playing the game, in effect, transforms the individual into a subject of larger powers, a player with an identity and roles defined by the game. The education of the individual for submission to such powers proceeds by positive reward of proper conduct, the observance of procedures and the reduction of personal identity to that of a standardized game piece. The reward, on the other hand, is not actually winning, but being given a chance to win. Such a chance is not only uncertain but, as the stakes and odds are driven upward by the eagerness and desperation of the players themselves, ever more elusive and, in fact, substantially impossible. The gamble of the individual who surrenders him/herself for a chance at an impossibility is analogous, not just to the Faustian pact with the devil, whereby the eternal soul is risked for an illusory temporal gain, but to the seductions of an economy that barter the future away in exchange for flashy but worthless baubles. It is also an acceptance of the loss of individuality and uniqueness in exchange for a generic and mechanically reproducible identity:

The structure of all success is basically the structure of gambling. To reject one's own name has always been the most thorough way to rid oneself of one's inhibitions and feelings of inferiority. And gambling is precisely a sort of steeplechase over the hurdles of one's own ego. The gambler is nameless; he has no name of his own and requires no one else's. For he is represented by the chips he places on specific numbers on the table ... And what intoxication it is in this city of opportunity, in this network of good fortune, to multiply oneself, to make oneself ubiquitous and be on the lookout for the approach of Lady Luck at any of ten different street corners.⁷⁹

Lords but also pawns on the board of European history, figures like William were faced with the temptations and demands of the centralization of political authority and the rise of the market economy – powers figuratively represented in literary language and imagery as the rules, devices, stakes and outcomes of a game of dice, as well as a game of love. Promising personal rewards but also requiring the subjection and submission of the player to its rules, such games rep-

⁷⁸ Benjamin observed that winning in gambling could be compared to “the expression of love by a woman who has been truly satisfied by a man. Money and property, normally the most massive and cumbersome things, here come directly from the hands of fate, as if they were the caressing response to a perfect embrace ...” (“Notes” [see note 76], 298).

⁷⁹ Walter Benjamin, “The Path to Success, in Thirteen Theses,” *Selected Writings* (see note 76), 144–47; here 146.

resented telling aspects of the affective and psychic experience of the human individuals who felt first-hand the intense political and economic forces, and cultural pressures, at work in the aristocratic courts of the High Middle Ages, that would eventually lead to the formation of the modern nation-states and the corresponding identities and subjectivities of their citizens.

Since at least the twelfth century, the reduction of western peoples to civic-minded self-restraint, obedience to law, and allegiance to the market and the state, have been accomplished as much by fear, force, torture, and punishment as by love, games, songs, and other charming pastimes. The latter measures, however, have proven much more effective, less costly, and also more likely to be embraced, willingly, even eagerly and lovingly, by those about to be subjected.

William Mahan

Peregrine Pleasures: The Sport of Falconry, Lovers, and Self-Identity in Medieval German Literature

Falconry has been called the oldest sport known to humanity,¹ and it originates from the Asian steppes around 2000 B.C.E.² It was introduced to Europe as early as the third century, and was first illustrated and written of around 500 C.E.³ Research literature depicting the importance of falconry in Europe during the Middle Ages is supported by zoo-archaeological studies such as those carried out by Zbigniew Bochenski, Teresa Tomek, Krzysztof Werz, and Michal Wojenka in their 2016 survey of medieval Poland, among others.⁴ The authors indicate prominent recordings of twelve species of birds from thirty-eight sites of medieval strongholds. Richard Almond describes falconry as a “prerogative of the nobility and gentry,”⁵ and the historian Annie Abram even says that hawking is “the sport pre-eminently associated in our minds with the Middle Ages,”⁶ although jousting, archery, sword fighting, hound hunting, and the like are arguably given more attention in popular culture. In comparison to the above activities, falconry was a “more sedate and introspective pastime,” and therefore also better-suited “for older men and ladies”⁷ than more active forms of the hunt.

1 Baudouin van Den Abeele, “Falconry,” *Medieval Studies* (Oxford University Press, Published Online, January 2014). DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780195396584-0122>. n.p. <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195396584/obo-9780195396584-0122.xml> (last accessed on Dec. 1, 2018). Van Den Abeele connects the introduction of falconry to the western world in the fifth century with the Germanic invasions, though it probably dates back much earlier.

2 Zbigniew Bochenski, Teresa Tomek, Krzysztof Werz, and Michal Wojenka, “Indirect Evidence of Falconry in Medieval Poland as Inferred from Published Zooarchaeological Studies,” *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 26 (2016): 661–69; here 661.

3 Bochenski et al, “Indirect Evidence” (see note 2), 661.

4 Bochenski et al, “Indirect Evidence” (see note 2), 661–69.

5 Richard Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2003), 39.

6 Annie Abram, *English Life and Manners in the Late Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1919), 232; here quoted from the Introduction to *The Art of Falconry*, Friedrich II of Hohenstaufen, trans. Casey A. Wood and F. Marjorie Fyfe (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1943), xxxv.

7 Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (see note 5), 39.

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In this article, I first examine historical documents in order to attempt a depiction of the reality of medieval falconry. After establishing the everyday forms of falconry, I turn to the German literature of the High Middle Ages to analyze the allegorical meaning of falconry and its relationship to society, where the falcon takes on an array of metaphorical significance, often in terms of love, nobility, and the protagonist's or hero's identity. While scholars have discussed the falcon scenes and dreams in one medieval narrative or another, and others have considered the presence of falconry in medieval narratives and poems in an encyclopedic manner, I specifically examine the phenomenon of character liminality and transition and the metaphorical significance of the falcon, first in heroic development, then in the development of a protagonist or speaker in a love relationship. I examine both poetry and narratives, first discussing texts featuring the falcon and hero including passages from the *Codex Manesse* and Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* (1200–1210), then I analyze the falcon in love relationships in Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan* (1210) as well as a poem by Der von Kürenberg and Dietrich von der Glezze's "Der Borte" ("Der Gürtel," composed between ca. 1270 and 1290), and finally the female figure's dreams and desire for self-emancipation such as in a poem by Dietmar von Aist, in *Salman und Morolf* (late twelfth century), and in the *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200).

The Reality of Medieval Falconry

In the fourteenth century, King Modus proclaims in *Les livres du roi Modus et de la reine Ratio* – dated 1354–1376 and attributed to Henri de Ferrières – that falconry is "the noblest of sports," a pleasure conferred on man by God, who "willed that the birds and beasts should be obedient to him!" (probably in support of his patron, King William I of England – a known aficionado of hawking).⁸ Yet this divine form of leisure was a sport and means of entertainment (and food, not to mention income) not only for royalty, but also for other members of courtly society, as depicted in the *Book of Modus*, where falconers are shown on foot as opposed to on horseback (as is preferred by nobility). At certain times in various kingdoms – for example, under Norman rule of England – falconry was restricted to the upper classes, but according to Almond, the "Forest Charter of 1215

⁸ *Les Livres du roy Modus et de la royne Ratio – Le Livre des deduis du roy Modus*, ed. Gunnar Tilander (Paris: Publications de la Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1932); quoted in William H. Forsyth, "The Noblest of Sports: Falconry in the Middle Ages," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 2.9 (1944): 253–59; here 253. Henry de Ferrers lists six hawkers under William I's employment in the *Domesday Book* (ca. 1086).

stated that every free man might have an eyrie (hawk's nest) in his own woods, from which he could lawfully take nestlings to train to hunt."⁹ Furthermore, the *Boke of Albans* allocates the goshawk to the yeoman and the tiercel to the poor man. Almond, however, qualifies this determination of the 'poor man,' arguing that an "economically poor man, or a peasant, would not have the means to buy and equip, train and maintain a hunting bird," and that the phrase is in fact "one of sympathy for the poor gentleman who has not the means to acquire a decent hunting bird, or the unfortunate mews employee with the wearisome task of caring for and flying such a fractious and, at times, unrewarding bird."¹⁰ Falconry is depicted as similarly 'middle class' in some contributions to the *Codex Manesse*, created between 1300 and 1350.

The *Codex Manesse* is the most comprehensive text collection of Middle High German medieval *Minnesang* poetry,¹¹ depicting over 100 poets of nobility (also often knights). In several cases, falconry appears as a motif. Kunz von Rosenheim, for example, is connected not only to 'lower' (in other words, extramarital) forms of *Minne* or love, with his beloved/mistress depicted as a hawking woman, but also to hawking on foot rather than on horseback.¹² This connects Kunz also to Kol von Nüssen, who hunts with the yet 'lower' (in terms of status and honor) form of crossbow assistance (fol. 396r) – suggesting in general that the sport need not be limited to its higher forms. The level of danger for one's bird in some ways determined the level of honor of the hunt. Thus, whereas Kol von Nüssen is performing "eine niedere Form der Beizjagd" ("a lower form of hawking"),¹³ the miniature of Heinrich von Meissen (fol. 14r) depicts falcons aloft in a dangerous aerial pursuit, with the falconers on horseback rather than on foot (in contrast, the latter was not considered as noble or grandiose because it was not as dangerous for the bird to chase ground quarry rather than avian prey in the sky, which was less of a spectacle, and was easier to perform). In the case of Kunz von Rosenheim, the woman accompanying him on foot ap-

9 Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (see note 5), 41.

10 Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (see note 5), 46.

11 See Lothar Voetz, *Der Codex Manesse: Die berühmteste Liederhandschrift des Mittelalters* (Darmstadt: Lambert Schneider, 2017); see also Marco Redolfi, "Die mittelalterliche Jagd und ihre Darstellung im Codex Manesse," *Mittelalter: Zeitschrift des Schweizerischen Burgvereins* 7.3 (2002): 61–70; here 61.

12 See Harald Wolter-von dem Knesebeck. "Aspekte der höfischen Jagd und ihrer Kritik in Bildzeugnissen des Hochmittelalters," *Jagd und höfische Kultur im Mittelalter*, ed. Werner Rösener. Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 135 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1997), 493–572; here 520.

13 Redolfi, "Die Mittelalterliche Jagd und ihre Darstellung im Codex Manesse" (see note 11), 61.

pears to be holding the lure, which, naturally, has seductive poetic connotations (and inverts the typical scenario in which the man lures the bird/woman).

Throughout the various kingdoms of medieval Europe, different species of birds of prey were chosen to represent social status. Certain birds were reserved for the nobility, with a descending hierarchy related to position. In the *Boke of St. Albans* (1486) of England, for example, an eagle is suited for an emperor (though in fact, not all eagles were good hunting birds, and their feathers were instead used for arrows and the birds themselves given mostly symbolic value), a female gyrfalcon for a king, a female goshawk for a yeoman, and a female sparrowhawk for a priest.¹⁴ However, the species and ranks varied in different regions, and, even in the same kingdoms, were inconsistent.¹⁵ John Cummins argues that “To a working falconer [of the time], much of this list would appear as pretty fair nonsense,” and that to an extent it would even surprise the author how commonly the list has been accepted, because it is in part a parody.”¹⁶ The *Boke of Albans* is in many ways more significant in the social vision it exemplifies, reflected also in medieval literature, in comparison to the factual credibility and scientific idealism of Frederick II’s book, *De Arte Venandi cum avibus* (1240s).¹⁷ Another distinction is that of falconry versus hawking, which were originally two types of hunting based on the type of bird used. Richard Grassby describes that, in England, falconry applied longer-winged birds with notched beaks such as falcons to “attack in the air” and “kill by force of impact.”¹⁸ Hawking, in contrast, applied shorter-winged birds thrown directly toward their prey from the arm (as distinguished in Frederick II’s book). In the *Codex Manesse*, both of them fall under the umbrella term *Beizjagd*.

De Arte Venandi cum avibus, literally *On the Art of Hunting with Birds* and translated by Wood and Fyfe as *The Art of Falconry*, is a treatise on ornithology and falconry written in Latin in the 1240s by Frederick II, The Holy Roman Emperor and King of Germany (or Friedrich, the son of Henry or Heinrich VI von Hohenstaufen), and dedicated to his son Manfred.¹⁹ The most famous copy of this treatise is a manuscript commissioned by Manfred, an illustrated two-column parchment codex of 111 folios today preserved in the Bibliotheca Palatina

14 Bochenski et al, “Indirect Evidence” (see note 2), 666.

15 Bochenski et al, “Indirect Evidence” (see note 2), 667.

16 John Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), 188.

17 See Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting* (see note 16), 189.

18 Richard Grassby, “The Decline of Falconry in Early Modern England,” *Past & Present* 157 (1997): 37–62; here 37.

19 See Knesebeck, “Aspekte der höfischen Jagd” (see note 12), 493.

(now in the Vatican Library). It is notable that Frederick II made his own observations and conducted research: he experimented, for instance, with eggs to see if they would hatch by the warmth of the sun and tried to determine whether birds used their sense of smell while hunting by blindfolding them. Frederick II drew from *De Scientia Venandi per Aves*, another treatise originally written in the 1240s by an Arab falconer named Moamin and translated into Latin by Master Theodore of Antioch at Frederick's court, as well as the work by the Persian falconer Ghatrif.²⁰ Those who worked in the mews or falcon hold of the court, especially the Lord Falconer, held a high office in royal households similar to the Master of Hunting.²¹ Cummins points out that Frederick's mews was "probably the most cosmopolitan in history, as a result of the Emperor's obsessive appetite for information."²² Frederick himself states that they "summoned from the four quarters of the Earth masters in the practice of the art of falconry."²³

And what were the characteristics of the master falconer? Frederick specifies that a falconer be "nimble but not nervous; shrewd and inventive; above all, good-tempered and patient," with "keen eyesight and hearing, a strong carrying voice and an ability to swim,"²⁴ a light sleeper, and an early riser. Also, he should avoid drunkenness, and it was generally held that falconers were more sober than huntsmen.²⁵

Though the original manuscript of Frederick's treatise was lost at the siege of Parma in 1248, there are six existing manuscripts in the form of a six-book version (in Bologna, Paris, Nantes, Valencia, Rennes, and Oxford), and six more as a two-book version (in Rome, Geneva, Stuttgart, Vienna, and two in Paris). Frederick's manuscript was first translated from Latin into a vernacular, French, around 1300,²⁶ and the first printed edition of the Latin manuscript appeared around 1596. It was not translated into German until 1896 and into English until 1943.²⁷ Crucially, Frederick observed that falcons never really become tame in terms of developing a close attachment to people in the same way

20 See Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk* (see note 16), 220.

21 See Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk* (see note 16), 217.

22 See Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk* (see note 16), 219.

23 Quoted in Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk* (see note 16), 219.

24 Quoted in Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk* (see note 16), 220.

25 See Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk* (see note 16), 220.

26 Translated as *L'art de la chace des oisiaus* and commissioned by Jean II, Lord of Dampierre.

27 German: H. Schöppfer, *Des Hohenstaufen-Kaisers Friedrich II Bücher von der Natur der Vögel und der Falknerei, mit den Zusätzen des Königs Manfred* (Berlin: Parey, 1896). English: Casey A. Wood and F. Marjorie Fyfe: *The Art of Falconry: Being the De Arte Venandi cum Avibus of Frederick II Hohenstaufen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1943).

that dogs and other mammals do (although others claim the birds are intelligent and loyal), which is why falconers would keep their birds a little hungry so that they would return to the lure. In a sense, neither creature is the master, and the human must acknowledge the bird's aloofness.

Although by today's standards many of the practices might constitute animal cruelty, there were not really any objectors to medieval hunting or animal 'rights activists' then as there are in today's form. The leashes tying birds to posts and bells hanging from their plumage, for example, would not have been questioned ethically – nor would the practice of starving hawks and falcons to ensure their return to their keepers post-hunt. There were, however, laws in place that dictated much of the protocol for falcon care – though they also sometimes effectively restricted hawking to the elite, and individuals who spoke out against animal cruelty “were rare, but they did exist,” according to John Aberth.²⁸ And there were in fact well established veterinary practices for hawks and falcons, as laid out, for example, in veterinary treatises such as *Die Wiener Falkenheilkunde* and *Zwei Bücher des Königs Dagus* (late fifteenth century), and translations of *De Animalibus* by Albertus Magnus (thirteenth century), which includes a section on falconry.²⁹

In Germany, the four most commonly used species were the peregrine, the merlin, the goshawk, and the sparrow-hawk.³⁰ The peregrine is the most valuable and is preferred in Gottfried's *Tristan* (ca. 1210; v. 2203) and Konrad von Würzburg's *Partonopier und Meliur* (late thirteenth century) over other species, and is also the favorite bird of the emperor in *Lohengrin* (thirteenth century; v. 3402).³¹ In general, *valke* denotes the peregrine (or possibly the gyrfalcon), used by Arthur's falconers and other kings in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, and appearing in both Kriemhild's dream in the *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200) and in Yrkane's dream in *Reinfried von Braunschweig* (ca. 1280/1290).³² As listed by Dalby, in German medieval literature the peregrine was connected to the highest nobility, the merlin was used by noble children and youths, the goshawk was

28 John Aberth, *An Environmental History of the Middle Ages: The Crucible of Nature* (London: Routledge, 2012), 206.

29 See Aberth, *An Environmental History of the Middle Ages* (see note 28), 201.

30 See Dalby, *Lexicon of the Mediaeval German Hunt: A Lexicon of Middle High German Terms (1050–1500) Associated with the Chase, Hunting with Bows, Falconry, Trapping and Fowling* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1965), xxvii. For a linguistic and ornithological study on the hawk, see Reiner Weick, *Der Habicht in der deutschen Dichtung des 12. bis 16. Jahrhunderts*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 589 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1993).

31 See Dalby, *Lexicon of the Mediaeval German Hunt* (see note 30), xxvii.

32 Dalby, *Lexicon of the Mediaeval German Hunt* (see note 30), xxvii.

principally connected to the lower classes, and the sparrow-hawk frequently associated with ladies.³³

The *Boke of St Albans* attests to the lingering popularity of falconry through the sixteenth century, when it was reprinted at least twenty-two times.³⁴ Here, one can begin to grasp the social significance of this sport: as with grafted plants and other natural décor, courtly animals were seen to be a symbolic extension of courtly entertainment and grandeur. The employment of falconers by the wealthy to both capture birds and train family members in falconry shows that this leisure pastime was associated with social, political and economic value – an important symbol of respect and friendship among nobles. One notices, for example, in the *Codex Manesse* that King Konrad the Young is adorned in green, as is characteristic of the hunt, while he accompanies another nobleman in a hawking scene topped off with a crested shield (fol. 7r).

The *Tresslerbuch* of Marienburg (1399–1409), a treasury book recording revenues and expenses, mentions two falconers sent to England from Königsberg (today Kaliningrad, northeast of Poland) with a consignment of falcons, as well as “white goshawks sent as gifts between noblemen, and the dispatch of falcons from Königsberg once again in 1406 as gifts from the Hofmeister of the Deutscher Orden to Henry IV of England.”³⁵ As a sport that required great patience and skill, falconry was a particularly time-consuming task or hobby. According to William Forsyth, each knight was as proud of his falcon as he was of his sword; bishops brought falcons to church, and even women took hawks or falcons to social gatherings with them.³⁶ And, according to Almond, “Noble falconers valued their hawks more than any other of their possessions.”³⁷ Flemish tapestries from the fifteenth century depict “hawking parties,”³⁸ suggesting that hawking was at times also a form of socializing.

Falconry and hunting in general were extremely important to early Germanic societies, and in the Burgundian law code a thief who stole a hunting hawk or falcon would be punished with the bird eating “six ounces of meat from his breast” if he could not afford to pay the full fine.³⁹ The growing popularity of fal-

³³ Dalby, *Lexicon of the Mediaeval German Hunt* (see note 30), xxvii.

³⁴ Grassby, “The Decline of Falconry in Early Modern England” (see note 18), 39.

³⁵ Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk* (see note 16), 197; *Tresslerbuch* 384.

³⁶ See William H Forsyth, “The Noblest of Sports: Falconry in the Middle Ages” (see note 8), 259.

³⁷ Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (see note 5), 40.

³⁸ I.e., *Les Chasses de Maximilien*; see Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (see note 5), 50.

³⁹ Aberth, *An Environmental History of the Middle Ages: The Crucible of Nature* (see note 28), 180.

conry toward the end of the Middle Ages is indicated by guide books written in the vernacular, such as *How to Catch Fish and Birds by Hand*, first printed in Heidelberg in 1493 and then in Strasbourg in 1498.⁴⁰

Falcons and People in German Medieval Literature

In medieval German literature (in contrast to the more historical documents examined above), relationships between people and wild animals serve as an analogue for the relationship between courtly culture and nature – somewhere between violent domination, taming, and harmonious cohabitation. Here I will examine specific literary documents depicting falconry as both reflective of society and as exploring social identities. For women, to whom falconry was open unlike other forms of hunting, falconry allowed for the exploration and transgression of traditional gender roles (especially for women, but also for men) and of self-identity.⁴¹ Thus the aspects of sport and ‘leisure,’ compounded with the extensive time required to learn the skill, encouraged time alone and reflections of the self – in addition to bonding with one’s bird. Especially in the high Middle Ages, the falcon represents a balance of courtly nobility (*Adel*) with the nobility of nature. For people who spend extensive leisure time training a falcon or other beast in this literature, the entertainment of the sport is coupled with an exploration of normative identities. Instead of brute force of man over nature, in the texts that I consider in this chapter, the sport of falconry opens up leisure time as a possibility for critical self-examination as well as the examination of love relationships. Turning now to the German literature of the Middle Ages, I will first examine the falcon’s relationship to the hero in terms of liminality, then the falcon as a symbol in a love or *minne* relationship, and finally I will discuss the falcon as directly connected to the woman figure exploring her identity within societal power structures. Although in Middle High German literature falcon imagery is employed to depict a number of human states, actions, and

⁴⁰ See Aberth, *An Environmental History of the Middle Ages: The Crucible of Nature* (see note 28), 204

⁴¹ This reflects reality as well: ladies were permitted to hunt with hawks, and women might have actually been employed in a mews, as was the case for James IV; Frederick II similarly provides hawking equipment and clothing not only for his falconers, but also for their wives and families. See Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk* (see note 16), 222.

identities, the falcon embodying the lover is perhaps the most poetically charged.

Falcon and Hero, Hero as Falcon

Long before the Middle Ages and even before the introduction of falconry to Europe, the bird of prey as the symbol of a hero was already prominent in ancient literature, for example, in Homer's depiction of Achilles in his pursuit of Hector.⁴² In the Middle Ages, falcons were fairly ubiquitous in literature, in which knights and kings carried falcons with them both to court and to battle (not unlike in reality). *Parzival* is an excellent example of this. Wolfram von Eschenbach describes Segramors similarly to Homer's Achilles, though his description pokes fun at the commonplace nature of the comparison:

Der junge, stolze âne bart,
sîn ors und er gewâpent wart.
ûz fuor Segramors roys,
kalopierende ultr ieuen poys.
sîn ors über hôhe stûden spranc.
manec guldin schelle dran erklanc ûf der decke und an dem man.
man moht in wol geworfen hân zem fasân inz dornach.
swem sîn ze suoehen wære gâch,
der fund in bî den schellen.
die kunden lûte hellen.⁴³

[That young, proud, beardless man – his charger and he were armed. Forth rode Segramors roys, galloping *after juven poys*. His charger leapt over high bushes, many a golden bell jingling, dangling from the horse's caparison and the man. A falconer would have had no trouble throwing *him* from his hand to pursue a pheasant into the thicket! If anyone were in a hurry to seek him out, he would find him by the bells – they knew how to ring out loudly!]⁴⁴

As André Lefevere explains, since falcons were also adorned with bells, “The sentence seems to mean that Segramors and his horse make the same noise

⁴² See Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (see note 5), 223.

⁴³ Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, ed. Joachim Bumke from manuscript D. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 119 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2008), 253–54. Book VI, vv. 286–87.

⁴⁴ Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival and Titarel*, trans. Cyril Edwards (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 2006), 121. Book VI, v. 287.

as a falcon on a hunt.”⁴⁵ Though perhaps a goshawk or similar bird would be the most effective for hunting (from a short range), the peregrine falcon was most favored by noble and professional falconers alike because of its devastating stoop and fierceness.⁴⁶ This was also the bird that served symbolically as a physiological extension of the knight in armor.⁴⁷

Wolfram von Eschenbach’s imagery “is notable for its originality,” in that he “tends to avoid the more conventional aspect of the sport, i.e. the mere pursuit of quarry, and concentrates on other features, such as the moulting and feeding of hawks.”⁴⁸ He also compares starving men to hawks,⁴⁹ and conveys the gaze of Queen Antikonie’s “valken-ouge.”⁵⁰ In a scene in which Gawan kisses Antikonie, Gawan reflects on how Antikonie’s servants aided her in his seduction, and how the situation came to be: “Gâwân des gedâhte, / dô si alle von im kômen ûz, daz dicke den grôzen strûz / væht ein vil kranker ar.”⁵¹ (“Gawan thought, now that they had all gone out of the room, that often the big ostrich is caught by the weakest eagle”).⁵² Whereas Gawan is the prey in this scenario, Gahmuret’s behavior is compared to a falcon’s. He braces himself for the queen’s advances: “ûf regte sich der degen wert / als ein vederspil, daz gert. / diu herberge dûht in guot. Alsô stuont des heldes muot”⁵³ (“The noble knight sat up, erect, like a falcon desiring its prey”).⁵⁴

In the *Codex Manesse* even the *Minnesänger* (pl.) themselves are depicted as protagonists or heroes, and their participation in hunting and interaction with birds and falcons makes them appear all the more noble. Hartmann von Aue is portrayed in the *Codex Manesse* as a knight with falcon heads covering his own garb along with his horse’s, a falcon head atop his helmet, and flowers blooming in the scene behind him. Hartmann identifies himself as a “dienstman [...] zuo Ouwe” and an educated knight (“ein ritter sô gelêret”) in the prologue to

45 Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, ed. André Lefevre. German Library, 2 (New York: Continuum, 2003), 238.

46 See Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (see note 5), 83.

47 See Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (see note 5), 83.

48 Dalby, *Lexicon of the Mediaeval German Hunt* (see note 30), xxxii.

49 See Weston, *Parzival: A Knightly Epic*, vol. 1 (see note 39), 191.

50 See Weston, *Parzival: A Knightly Epic*, vol. 1 (see note 39), 427.

51 *Parzival*, ed. Bumke (see note 43), 359. Book VIII, v. 406.

52 Book VIII, v. 407, p. 172 in Edwards. Compare the above English to Weston, *Parzival: A Knightly Epic*, vol. 1. 233: “how a mighty bird / Is oft trapped by a little falcon.”

53 *Parzival*, ed. Joachim Bumke (see note 43), 56, Book II, v. 1889 (64, 7).

54 *Parzival*, trans. Edwards (see note 44), 28, Book II v. 64. In Weston: “as a falcon that plumeth its wings for flight,” 125.

Der arme Heinrich (ca. 1190/1200).⁵⁵ He is praised for his way with words in Gottfried's *Tristan* (ca. 1210), in the famous episode "Tristans Schwertleite," and is generally known as one of the more eloquent German medieval poets. In Hartmann von Aue's *Iwein*, the protagonist forms a similar bond with a lion. After first saving the lion and gaining his friendship, to the extent that the lion's "animal nature would allow" ("unde einem tiere tohte"),⁵⁶ Iwein tells Lady Lunette, "ich wil sîn erkant / bî mînem lewen der mit mir vert" ("I wish to be known [...] [b]y the lion who travels at my side").⁵⁷ Iwein thus comes to give himself a new name to represent his self-development of identity: "Ich heize der rîter mit dem leun" ("I am called the Knight with the Lion"⁵⁸). Cummins mentions "animals or hawks which lead the hunter away from his familiar environment and into the nebulous geography and landscape of Arthurian legend"⁵⁹; and in the solitude offered by the removed landscape of *âventiure* as compared the safety of the court, it is easy to see how one might form a friendship with an animal.

In the *Codex Manesse*, the entry for Ulrich von Gutenberg depicts a harmonious scene of a nobleman with his falcon, his hat also adorned with what look to be peacock feathers (fol. 73r). The entry for Ulrich von Buwenburg, in contrast, depicts a knight among a group, clearly taking the heroic leading role, with a spear in one hand and falcon in the other (fol. 359r). Another instance of falcons appearing in medieval literature is in Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan*: according to Cummins, Gottfried's audience had a "general recognition that the finest birds of prey came from Norway and other Scandinavian countries."⁶⁰

As Albrecht Classen mentions in the introduction to this volume, Tristan's skills in falconry and in chess are the reasons that Norwegian merchants kidnap him. Tristan boards a merchant ship from Norway, intending to buy falcons, but becomes absorbed in a chess game and finds himself far from shore. Such merchant ships were adorned with animals, for example noble birds of prey, as were crests, shields, helmets, and other knightly and courtly relics. The eagle was the heraldic symbol of the Hohenstaufen dynasty as emperors – inherited by the Germanic peoples from the ancient Romans.⁶¹

55 Hartmann von Aue, *Der arme Heinrich*, ed. Nathanael Busch (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2015), 9, vv. 1–5.

56 *Iwein*, ed. and trans. McConeghy (see note 56), 160–61, v. 3876.

57 *Iwein*, ed. and trans. McConeghy (see note 56), 226–27, vv. 5495–96.

58 *Iwein*, ed. and trans. Patrick M. McConeghy (see note 56), 226–27, v. 5500.

59 Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting* (see note 16), 9.

60 Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting* (see note 16), 197.

61 Compare images of the "Arms of the Hohenstaufen Sicily" and the flags of the Kingdom of Sicily and the Holy Roman Empire. See also the seal of Conrad II (1029) with a depiction of the

Love's Falcon: Metaphor and *Minne* Relationships

Examples of love fused with the image of falconry abound. For example, in Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan*, the narrator refers to Isolde as "Love's falcon" when the steward appears at court to claim her as his reward.⁶² Der von Kürenberg's "Falkenlied" (late twelfth century) is relatively well known, and its speaker relates their relationship with a falcon that they once raised and then released. Cummins and others venture to suggest that the speaker is a female who released her male falcon, and that the relationship parallels a love relationship – a rather provocative reading. Cummins sees the text as either a dialogue "between the bird's first mistress and a confidant, or an internal monologue."⁶³ In this case, the speaker would be referring to her falcon as a "he" (even though, ironically, female raptors are larger and more powerful). At any rate, the falcon symbolizes an "emotional treasure, an object of tenderness and wistful nostalgia," and Der von Kürenberg leaves "much of the creative process to the reader" in his "Falkenlied."⁶⁴ As Cummins indicates, "Linkages between falconry and love-making are common in medieval miniatures and carvings,"⁶⁵ in which usually the man is the one holding a falcon on his arm. Yet in a reading opposed to that by Cummins, David Wells argues that there is a "need for caution in the understanding of imagery and to the fundamental truth that flora and fauna played a vital role in the real world of medieval Europe," and hence "the various meanings attributable to the falcon in different contexts and above all the possibility that in, for example, Kürenberg's *Falkenlied*, it symbolizes no more than a falcon."⁶⁶

eagle scepter. The symbol has its basis in Greco-Roman mythology, in the constellation Aquila. Here see Norbert Weyss, "Der Doppeladler in aller Welt: Geschichte eines Symbols," *Katalog zur Ausstellung, Medilihha*. Schriftenreihe des Bezirks-Museums-Vereines Mödling, 83 (Mödling: Museum der Stadt, 1993/1994).

⁶² See Sidney M. Johnson, "*This Drink Will Be the Death of You*: Interpreting the Love Potion in Gottfried's *Tristan*," *A Companion to Gottfried von Strassburg's "Tristan"*, ed. Will Hasty. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics and Culture (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003), 87–112; here 100.

⁶³ Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk* (see note 16), 232.

⁶⁴ Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk* (see note 16), 232.

⁶⁵ Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk* (see note 16), 230.

⁶⁶ David A. Wells, "Medieval Literature," *The Years Work in Modern Language Studies*, 42 (Leiden: Brill, 1980): 690–752.

Markus Stock compares several other minnesongs to Der Kürenberger's *Falkenlied*, finding intriguing similarities as well as decisive differences. He looks at minnesongs by Burkart von Hohenfels and Reinmar der Alte, arguing that both of them use falcon imagery "to talk about the dissociation of the (male) self, finding itself in a state of (unrequited) minne fixation."⁶⁷ One sees this dissociation of the male self in Reinmar, for example, in "Als ich werbe unde unde mir mîn herze stê, when the singer/speaker uses falcon imagery to describe his upbringing: "Ich bin als ein wilder valk erzogen, / der durch sînen wilden muot als hêhe gert" (I was raised as a wild falcon, who, through his wild courage, yearned for the heights)".⁶⁸ Stock contends that the "Falkenflugmetapher" (falcon-flight metaphor) in Burkart functions to make the inner psychological processes of the lyrical I visible.⁶⁹ He argues that, compared to Der Kürenberger's "Falkenlied," there is a doubled identity of the woman as wild and as falconer ("als Wild und als Falknerin"), despite the conventional reduction of the woman to her (falcon) eyes. In Burkart, there is an oscillating thought pattern – described by Stock as "Gedankenflug" (flight of thoughts) – representing the lyrical I's uncertainty.⁷⁰ The woman finds herself as both hunted and falconer. Quoting Reinmar, Stock finds the falcon in Reinmar, Der Kürenberger and Dietmar von Aist to be a symbol of mixed feelings and freedom of choice.⁷¹ He also notes a similar "Gedankenflug" metaphor in Heinrich von Morungen's *Freudenlied* (song of joy) "In sô hêher swebender wunne," but without direct falcon imagery: "ich var, als ich vliegen kunne, mit gedanken eimer umbe sie" (1, 3–4; it seemed to me as though I could fly, with my thoughts, always above you).⁷² Here, as Stock points out – but also in the other texts that I discuss – the concept of "Gedankenminne"

67 Markus Stock, "wilde, wilde muot, wildekeit. Bildgebende Verfahren und wilde-Metaphorik im Minnesang," *Wolfram Studien XXV: wildekeit, Spielräume literarischer obscuritas im Mittelalter*, ed. Franz-Josef Holznagel, Susanne Kübele, and Ricarde Bauschke-Hartung (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2016), 343–74; here 373 (Abstract).

68 Reinmar der Alte, "Als ich werbe unde unde mir mîn herze stê," XXIX., L. 180, 10, *Des Minnesangs Frühling*. Vol. 1, ed. Karl Lachmann, Moriz Haupt, Friedrich Vogt and Carl von Kraus (Stuttgart: S. Hirzel Verlag, 1982), 349.

69 Stock, "wilde, wilde muot, wildekeit" (see note 67), 359.

70 Stock, "wilde, wilde muot, wildekeit" (see note 67), 361–62.

71 Stock, "wilde, wilde muot, wildekeit" (see note 67), 362. "Symbol des Gefühlsaufschwungs und der Freiheit der Wahl," quoted from Reinmar der Alte, *Lieder*. Nach der Weingartner Handschrift (B), ed. Günter Schweikle (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1986), 381.

72 Heinrich von Morungen, "In sô hêher swebender wunne," IV., L. 125, 19, *Des Minnesangs Frühling*. Vol. 1, unter Benutzung der Ausgaben von Karl Lachmann und Moriz Haupt, Friedrich Vogt und Carl von Kraus, bearbeitet von Hugo Moser und Helmut Tervooren. 38th, newly rev. ed. (Stuttgart: S. Hirzel Verlag, 1988), 242.

– spiritual love, established at the latest by Friedrich von Hausen in German minnesong – plays a significant role.⁷³

The miniature of Wernher von Teufen (fol. 69r) is the only depiction in the *Codex Manesse* of a woman holding a falcon – although her identity remains anonymous. That the woman holds the hawk in the picture signifies her power or influence in the relationship, and perhaps implies that she was either of higher status than Wernher, or that she is the hunter with the poet as her prey. Wernher von Teufen, meanwhile, gives her a loving and supportive embrace. Presumably they are out hunting with falcons in the countryside, an activity generally reserved for individuals of nobility – and also one that could be undertaken by lovers. An image of a pair of lovers holding a falcon often implies sexual relations. Although there are several miniatures depicting the sport of falconry, few images depict a woman holding the falcon. As the crests in the background and even the horses suggest, this is a scene that Wernher describes as harmonious and noble in a natural way. In contrast to the majority of comparisons of male heroes to falcons, not all comparisons to women are flattering. Der von Kurenberg, for example, writes elsewhere (not in the “Falkenlied” examined above): “Wîp unde vederspîl / diu werdent lîhte zam. / swer sî ze rehte lucket, sô suochent sî den man. / als warb ein schœne ritter / umb eine frouwen guot. / als ich dar an gedenke, / sô stêt wol hôhe mîn muot” (“Women and falcons / are easily tamed: / If you lure them the right way, / they come to meet their man. / This is the method a fair knight used / to win a noble lady. / When I think of it, I feel / a joyful confidence myself!”).⁷⁴

On the one hand, falconry was associated with courtly love because it was such an important characteristic of courtly life. However, it is also frequently associated with lower, extramarital forms of *Minne*, as in the fourteenth-century *Der Minne Falkner*.⁷⁵ Here, the poet depicts himself as a falconer who has lost his falcon/lady: he is advised by a more experienced falconer to find a less valuable and more suitable hawk, and by a bad falconer to trap the bird in a net (i.e., to use unworthy methods of seduction), which he declines to do on the grounds that it might damage her wings. He remains unsuccessful at the end of the poem, and, having tied the lure to his breast, the bird seizes his heart and flies away.

Considerably later, William Shakespeare used this imagery, inspired by English predecessors, to depict the man who loses and regains his lover/hawk. In

⁷³ Stock, “wilde, wilde muot, wildekeit” (see note 67), 362.

⁷⁴ Der von Kurenberg, II., L. 13, 10, *Des Minnesangs Frühling*. Vol. 1 (see note 72), 26, stanza 13; trans. Peter Dronke, *The Medieval Lyric* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1968), 115.

⁷⁵ See Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk* (see note 16), 229.

“The Lover Compareth Himself to the Painful Falconer” (1566), he describes how the falconer will behave upon seeing his once-lost bird again: “By Lure then in finest sort, / he seekes to bring her in.”⁷⁶

A final interesting example of falconry as a metaphor in a love relationship is in Dietrich von der Glezze’s “Der Borte” (ca. 1270–1290).⁷⁷ The story follows the knight Conrat and his beautiful wife, whose eyesight is described as follows: “mich nimet michel wunder, / daz ir ougin sint so clar: / si sihet reht sam ein adelar”⁷⁸ (“I am really amazed that her eyes are so bright: she has eyesight like an eagle”).⁷⁹ Having gained knightly honor only in foreign countries, Conrad wishes to participate in a local tournament to gain popular acknowledgement. As he is journeying, another knight comes by the garden, and he instantly falls in love with Conrad’s wife as all men who meet her gaze do. She denies his advances, advising him: “so sult ir hinnen riten, ir ensult niht lenger biten”⁸⁰ (“ride off and not stay here any longer”).⁸¹ He first offers her his magnificent goshawk, which he claims can catch any game: “swaz vluget oder vligen sol, daz veht der habich allez wol”⁸² (the hawk can catch anything that “can or should be able to fly”).⁸³ He also offers her his greyhounds, which are likewise gifted: “kein tir uf der erde kreiz, / der sie hetzte, goteweiz, / daz snelle oder der sterke wern / mohte vor in ernern”⁸⁴ (the hounds were “so good that there is not one animal here on earth which, if hunted by them, would, irrespective of its speed and strength, be able to get away”).⁸⁵ Yet, Conrad’s wife tells the knight, “ich wil durch dehein hunde min ere uf prellen und mich in schande vellen”⁸⁶

76 William Shakespeare, “The Lover compareth himself to the painful Falconer,” *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites*, ed. Edward Arber (London: Southgate, 1878), 62–63; here 63.

77 Albrecht Classen dates *Der Borte* to this time, based on the dedication to Wilhelm of Weidenau in Silesia. Albrecht Classen, “Disguises, Gender-Bending, and Clothing Symbolism in Dietrich von der Gletze’s *Der Borte*,” *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 45.2 (2009): 95–110; here 98. As noted by Classen, there are parallels to the Greek tale of Cephalus and Procris, but Dietrich’s tale is also unique. Albrecht Classen, *Erotic Tales of Medieval Germany* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007), 19.

78 *Der Borte des Dietrich von der Glezze*, ed. Otto Richard Meyer. *Germanistische Arbeiten* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter’s Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1915), 80, vv. 40–42.

79 *Dietrich of the Glezze/Gletzte: The Belt*, trans. Albrecht Classen, in *Erotic Tales* (see note 77), 20, vv. 40–45.

80 *Der Borte* (see note 78), 86, vv. 205–06.

81 *The Belt*, trans. Classen (see note 77), 22, vv. 205.

82 *Der Borte* (see note 78), 87, vv. 225–26.

83 *The Belt*, trans. Classen (see note 77), 22, vv. 225–30.

84 *Der Borte* (see note 78), 87–88, vv. 235–39.

85 *The Belt*, trans. Classen (see note 77), 22, vv. 235–40.

86 *Der Borte* (see note 78), 88, vv. 242–44.

("For no dog would I throw away my honor and lower myself into shameful-ness").⁸⁷ He offers her also his horse, which she refuses to accept despite its guarantee of victory in battle, and finally he offers her his jewel-encrusted belt, which will allow its wearer never to lose honor and always to enjoy happiness. According to the knight, the belt's wearer "wirdet nimmer erslagen, / er mac nimmer verzagen, / er gesiget zu aller zit, / swenne er ritet an den strit" ("will never be slain; he will never despair; he will always win the victory whenever he enters a fight").⁸⁸ Finally, he offers all of the above animals together with the belt. She finally concedes, and "von der rechten minne gruz / wart dem ritter sorgen buz"⁸⁹ ("Through the joys of true love the knight was healed from all his pains").⁹⁰

A servant, having witnessed what happened, rides to Conrad and tells him what transpired. Hearing this, Conrad determines to leave his wife and country for good, and goes off toward Brabant. After some time alone, Conrad's wife decides that she must go and find him: "si sprach: min herre ist starc / gewesen lange wider mich: / an di reise so muz ich, / suchen in, den liben man, / wan ich ni liber lip gewan"⁹¹ ("She said to herself, 'My lord has kept a strong grudge against me for a long time. I have to go traveling to look for him, my dear husband, because I have never loved anyone more than him').⁹²

The wife (pretending to be a knight) purchases twelve strong men-for-hire, as well as "ritters cleider [...] harnasch, glanz unde zir"⁹³ ("knightly clothing and splendid armor").⁹⁴ She then reaches the castle of Brabant, and is invited in by the duke, believing her to be a knight with an entourage of squires. Conrad is also at the castle eating, and his wife is seated next to him. She introduces herself to him as Henry from Swabia.

The two form a friendship, and everyone is impressed by Henry's animals. The duke offers him five hundred marks for the greyhounds, many riches for the goshawk, and gold and land for the horse, but Henry refuses.⁹⁵ Then, a Briton arrives at a tournament that the duke has organized, and challenges all of the knights to joust. Conrad attempts to defeat him, but fails, which seems to continue his series of losses in tournaments. After Henry and the Briton both break a

⁸⁷ *The Belt*, trans. Classen (see note 77), 22, v. 240.

⁸⁸ *Der Borte* (see note 78), 90, vv. 310–14; *The Belt*, trans. Classen (see note 77), 23, vv. 310–14.

⁸⁹ *Der Borte* (see note 78), 92, vv. 351–52.

⁹⁰ *The Belt*, trans. Classen (see note 77), 23, vv. 351–54.

⁹¹ *Der Borte* (see note 78), 95, vv. 430–34.

⁹² *The Belt* (see note 77), trans. Classen, 24, v. 430.

⁹³ *Der Borte* (see note 78), 97, vv. 487–88.

⁹⁴ *The Belt* (see note 77), trans. Classen, 24, vv. 488–89.

⁹⁵ *The Belt* (see note 77), trans. Classen, 25, vv. 555–600.

lance on the other, they rush toward each other a third time and Henry unhorses the Briton.⁹⁶ Shortly thereafter, the duke organizes “ein hervart / fur gegen einer stat”⁹⁷ (“a war campaign against a city,”)⁹⁸ and Henry and Conrad find themselves in battle together. Conrad asks Henry for the greyhounds or goshawk as a gift out of friendship: “geselle min, / nu tut mir ganze truwe schin. / ich wil uwer eigen sin, / und mines herzen schrin / sol uch in ganzer libe tragen”⁹⁹ (“My friend, please demonstrate all your trust. I will be your servant, and the chamber of my heart will house you with full love”).¹⁰⁰ Henry responds, “min dinc daz ist so gewant: / welt ir tun, daz ih wil, / so gibe ich uch daz vederspil”¹⁰¹ (“My condition is as follows: If you are willing to do whatever I want, then I’ll give you the bird of prey”).¹⁰² Sir Henry tells him, “min gerinc / ist einer hande dinc: / ich minne gerne di man, / ni dehein wip ich gewan. / tut ir daz und swaz ich wil, winde unde vederspil / gibe ich uch mit willen”¹⁰³ (“My desire is a small matter: I love men, and have never loved women. If you do whatever I wish, I’ll gladly give you the greyhounds and the bird of prey”).¹⁰⁴ Sir Henry tells him, “du must dich nider zu mir legen, / so wil ich mit dir pflegen / aller der minne, / der ich von minem sinne / gedenken und ertrahten kan”¹⁰⁵ (“Listen, you have to lie down with me, then I will do all the wonderful things that I can imagine and think of, and especially what any man usually does with his wife when he is lying next to her at night,”)¹⁰⁶ and Conrad answers immediately, “ich wil iz allez liden / unde nihtes niht vermeiden; / des du hast gegert an mich, / daz wil unde muz ich / dulden durch winde und vederspil”¹⁰⁷ (“I will suffer everything, and not refuse anything, whatever you desire from me. I want to and have to accept it all in return for the greyhounds and the bird of prey”).¹⁰⁸

Of course, it is only *after* Conrad has agreed to Henry’s request that he discovers Henry to be his wife, and the two of them ultimately reconcile and return

⁹⁶ See *The Belt* trans. Classen (see note 77), 26, v. 690. As to tournaments, see the contribution to this volume by Alan Murray.

⁹⁷ *Der Borte* (see note 78), 105, vv. 706–07.

⁹⁸ *The Belt* (see note 77), trans. Classen, 27, v. 705.

⁹⁹ *Der Borte* (see note 78), 106, vv. 725–29.

¹⁰⁰ *The Belt*, trans. Classen (see note 77), 27, v. 725.

¹⁰¹ *Der Borte* (see note 78), 106, vv. 732–34.

¹⁰² *The Belt*, trans. Classen (see note 77), 27, v. 734.

¹⁰³ *Der Borte* (see note 78), 106, vv. 735–42.

¹⁰⁴ *The Belt*, trans. Classen (see note 77), 27, vv. 737–42.

¹⁰⁵ *Der Borte* (see note 78), vv. 755–59; 107.

¹⁰⁶ *The Belt*, trans. Classen (see note 77), 27, vv. 755–60.

¹⁰⁷ *Der Borte* (see note 78), 107–08, vv. 765–69.

¹⁰⁸ *The Belt*, trans. Classen (see note 77), 27, vv. 765–70.

to Swabia. Sir Henry instructs Conrad, “daz er sich an den rucke leit”¹⁰⁹ (“to lie down on his back”),¹¹⁰ which he does, but then Henry speaks to him condescendingly, revealing him/herself to be Conrad’s wife:

[...] weiz got,
 ir sit worden mir ein spot!
 welt ir nu ein ketzer sin
 durch hunde und den habich min?
 vil untugenthafter lip,
 ich bin uwer elich wip.
 durch habich und durch winde
 und durch daz ros swinde
 und durch minen borten gut,
 der mir gibet hohen mut
 zu strite und zu tjuste,
 einen ritter ich kuste
 und liz in bi mir slafen,
 daz ir mit dem wafen
 weret mit des borten kraft
 werder in der ritterschaft.
 nu welt ir ein ketzter sin
 vil gerne durch den habich min
 un rumt ir vor mir di lant.
 ir habt uch selben geschant!
 daz ich tet, daz was menschlich;
 so woldet ir unkristenlich
 vil gerne haben nu getan.
 ir sit ein unreiner man,
 daz ir durch di minsten gabe zwo
 uwer ere wodlet also
 haben gar verlorn.
 sehet, daz ist mir zorn.¹¹¹

[By God, what a loser you are! Are you willing to turn into a heretic in exchange for dogs and my goshawk? You are a man without virtues! I am your wife in marriage. In return for the goshawk and greyhounds, for the fast horse and my valuable belt which gives me knightly spirit in war and jousts, I kissed another knight and let him sleep with me, so that you would gain more honor in knighthood with the help of the weapons and the strength of the belt. Now you are very willing to turn into a heretic in order to win my goshawk, whereas you had left me alone at home. You have brought shame on yourself! The wrongdoing I committed was human frailty, whereas it was a crime against Christianity what you would have done voluntarily. You are a corruptible man considering that you

109 *Der Borte* (see note 78), 108, v. 74.

110 *The Belt*, trans. Classen (see note 77), 27, v. 770.

111 *Der Borte* (see note 78), 108–09, vv. 775–802.

would have abandoned, just for two miniscule gifts, your honor. I tell you, I am furious about that.]¹¹²

Conrad responds, “vrowe min, / ich wil uwer eigen sin. / verget mir di unzuht, vrowe, libe reine fruht”¹¹³ (“My wife, I submit myself to you. Please grant me forgiveness for my failure, my dear wife, you fruit of innocence”).¹¹⁴ Does the ‘happy ending’ of this *maere* have within it any ironic criticism of the wife – is she indeed far less guilty than her husband, as she convinces him? Albrecht Classen observes that she “does not consider the problematic framework for her own behavior and seems to push it deliberately into the background.”¹¹⁵ It seems that while she succeeds in ‘taming,’ her husband, she herself might refuse to be subjected to the same taming.

According to Classen, “Neither the search for specific gender roles nor the attempt to identify a deliberate undermining of those roles represents Dietrich’s main interest.”¹¹⁶ One can certainly see the falcon-lover metaphor operating here, as the tale is one of seduction and (temporary) heartbreak. Interesting is that the one who possesses the goshawk gains power as a hunter through the bird’s magic – first the traveling knight who arrives in Swabia with the belt, and then Conrad’s wife/Henry. The possession of the goshawk also seems to correlate to sexual power. Yet the person who desires the hawk – first Conrad’s wife (albeit for Conrad’s sake, and less so than the belt) must sacrifice her honor to obtain the bird, and then Conrad himself does so only for the sake of the bird and not the other magical creatures and belt. Rather than a falcon hunting its prey, this relationship structure more parallels the metaphor of the taming of a falcon, as in the poetry of Der von Kurenberg (see above). But Conrad’s apology for his adulterous intentions at the end of the tale, juxtaposed to his wife’s excusing of her adultery as simply “human frailty,” and even her further shaming of him, suggests the possibility that the falcon might not always be tamed entirely.

112 *The Belt*, trans. Classen (see note 77), 27, vv. 775–95.

113 *Der Borte* (see note 78), 109, vv. 803–06.

114 *The Belt*, trans. Classen (see note 77), 27, v. 800.

115 Classen, “Disguises, Gender-Bending, and Clothing” (see note 77), here 103.

116 Classen, “Disguises, Gender-Bending, and Clothing” (see note 77), here 97.

The Dreaming Woman: A Tamed Falcon Taking Flight

Falcons signify more for female identity in the Middle Ages than their relationships to men alone – in contrast, the falcon also factors as a symbol for female independence. Falconry was seen as a proper activity for women, “lacking the fast pace and bloodier aspects of hunting but involving the aristocratic skills of horsemanship and the pursuit of game.”¹¹⁷ Learning the skills of hawking was part of an aristocratic young woman’s education.

Two long French poems from the thirteenth century by Robert de Blois and Jacques d’Amiens specify that hawking, together with chess, telling stories, being witty and playing musical instruments, was part of “the notion of polished manners required of society’s ladies.”¹¹⁸ For one thing, women did not have to kill the prey themselves unlike in the case of other forms of hunting, as the kill was performed by the bird. To Almond, this is a form of the bird-as-hunter “acting as gender replacements for their men folk.”¹¹⁹ Still, all of this plays on the irony that it is in fact the female bird that is larger, fiercer, and more frequently used for hunting – and that this bird in turn comes to symbolize heroism and nobility.

The relationship between man and animal in the High Middle Ages is characterized by a state of hybridity. Dietmar von Aist’s *Es stuont eine vrouwe alleine* (late twelfth century), Kriemhild in the *Nibelungenlied*, and Salome in *Salman und Morolf* (late twelfth century) provide three examples of women who assume empowering roles in connection to falcons.¹²⁰ In Dietmar’s poem, the meadow serves as a liminal space between the court and forest where humans commune with nature, and as a place where one spends their leisure time. The woman identifies with the falcon she sees flying – like him, she had chosen to spread her wings and fly about, seeking the lover of her choice rather than remaining in the court.

117 Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (see note 5), 159.

118 Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (see note 5), 159.

119 Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (see note 5), 160–61.

120 For more on gender and women in medieval literature, see, for example, Sara S. Poor, “Gender Studies and Medieval Women in German,” *College Literature* 28.2 (2001): 118–29; see now Albrecht Classen, “The Agency of Wives in High Medieval German Courtly Romances and Late Medieval Verse Narratives: From Hartmann von Aue to Heinrich Kaufringer,” *Quidditas* 39 (2018): 25–53. <https://humanities.byu.edu/rmmra/pdfs/39.pdf> (last accessed on Dec. 12, 2018)

She resists her traditional, stationary role in the court, signified by the metaphorical comparison to a tree; but at the same time, her assuming of the more male role (that of the mobile falcon) has rendered her lonely. In this way, she is a sort of inversion of the “lost falcon” leitmotif in German medieval literature identified by Dalby, in which usually “a lady tells the poet of her grief at having lost her treasured falcon,”¹²¹ for example in Der von Kürenberg’s “Falkenlied,” and “Der entflogene Falke” in *Mittelhochdeutsche Minnereden*.¹²² Further examples of the falcon representing a noble lover include the anonymous *Reinfried von Braunschweig* (late thirteenth century), and “Der Minner im Garten” and “Routlieb” in *Mittelhochdeutsche Minnereden*.¹²³ Yet in Dietmar von Aist, the lady herself is the lost falcon rather than the grieving hunter who has lost their bird/lover. The falconry motif resembles a larger relationship between man and beast at this time, and the taming of the wild served not only as a popular form of entertainment but also as a way to earn honor.

Another striking intersection of human and falcon in medieval literature, particularly in Middle High German sources, is in the depiction of the human unconsciousness by way of the dream world. The image of the falcon gains weight in the foreshadowing aspects of certain narratives, often still symbolizing the hero in a woman’s dream. According to Heinrich Beck, “Tierträume haben vorausweisende Funktion [...] Den Traum kann derjenige entschlüsseln, der die Verweisstruktur zwischen Tier und Mensch erkennt und die Hintergründigkeit des im Traum Dargestellten richtig deuten kann.”¹²⁴ In the *Nibelungenlied*, Kriemhild has a dream in the first âventiure, in which she raises a falcon, possibly revealing an unconscious desire for self-emancipation (to remain independent rather than to marry). In the dream, Kriemhild raises a falcon, but loses it. The reader is told of the dream of Kriemhild: “wie si züge einen valken / starc, schoen und wilde, / den ir zwêne aren erkrummen, / daz si daz muoste sehen, / ir enkunde in dirre werlde / leider nimmêr geschehn.”¹²⁵ (“Growing up amongst all this splendor, Kriemhild once had a dream. She dreamed that she had trained a fal-

121 Dalby, *Lexicon of the Mediaeval German Hunt* (see note 30), xxix.

122 For more on the theme of “Liebe als Jagd” and on *Minnereden* in general, see Jacob Klingner, *Minnereden im Druck: Studien zur Gattungsgeschichte*. Philologische Studien und Quellen, 226 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2010).

123 See Dalby, *Lexicon of the Mediaeval German Hunt* (see note 30), xxix.

124 Heinrich Beck, *Das Ebersignum im Germanischen: Ein Beitrag zur germanischen Tiersymbolik*. Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker; N. F. 16 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1965), 135.

125 *Das Nibelungenlied*, ed. Hermann Reichert from the St. Gall Manuscript (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 46, v. 12

con that was strong, beautiful, and wild, only to have it viciously destroyed by two eagles. She could not have imagined a more horrible sight").¹²⁶ She is shocked by the dream, which her mother Ute interprets as symbolic of her future lover – a nobleman whom she could lose if she is not careful: "der valke, den dû ziuhest, / daz ist ein edel man: / in enwelle got behüeten, / dû muost in schiere verloren hân"¹²⁷ ("The falcon you will tame is a noble man. May God protect him, for you will surely lose him").¹²⁸ Whobrey argues that "Kriemhild is also foreshadowing her life as a cloistered widow, which is avoided at the very end of the first part by a fateful message from the East."¹²⁹ The foreshadowing dream has, of course, as Whobrey points out, been used as a narrative structuring device since antiquity.¹³⁰

Albrecht Classen distinguishes that Ute does not necessarily foresee the hero's tragic death ¹³¹ – rather, she emphasizes that Kriemhild would have to protect Siegfried well. Kriemhild tells her mother that she would prefer to remain a simple maid, without a knight to woo her. Her mother responds by saying not to commit to such an idea, as love is one of the greatest joys in life, but then Kriemhild insists all the more that the fates of many other young women show that joy is often followed by sorrow: "ez ist an manegen wîben / vil dicke worden schîn, / wie liebe mit leide / ze jungest lônên kan"¹³² ("It is only too evident that many women have been rewarded with suffering for their love").¹³³ As ten Katen

126 *The Nibelungenlied with the Klage*, trans. William Whobrey (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 2018), 2, v. 13.

127 *Das Nibelungenlied*, ed. Reichert (see note 125), 46, v. 12.

128 *The Nibelungenlied*, trans. Whobrey (see note 126), 4, v. 14.

129 *The Nibelungenlied*, trans. Whobrey (see note 126), 2.

130 *The Nibelungenlied*, trans. Whobrey (see note 126), 2.

131 See ten Katen, "Die Träume Kriemhilds – Analyse und Vergleich" (see note 134); see also Albrecht Classen: "Transpositions of Dreams to Reality in Middle High German Narratives," *Shifts and Transpositions in Medieval Narrative. A Festschrift*, ed. Karen Pratt (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 109–20; Otfried Ehrismann, *Nibelungenlied: Epoche, Werk, Wirkung* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1987); Jan-Dirk Müller, *Das Nibelungenlied* (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 2002).

132 *Das Nibelungenlied*, ed. Hermann Reichert from the St. Gall Manuscript (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 46, v. 15.

133 *The Nibelungenlied*, trans. Whobrey (see note 126), 3, v. 17. For more research on Kriemhild's dream, see the following: D. G. Mowatt, "A Note on Kriemhild's Three Dreams," *Seminar: A Journal of German Studies* 7.2 (1971): 114–22; Martina Feichtenschlager, *Entblößung und Verhüllung: Inszenierung weiblicher Fragilität und Verletzbarkeit in der mittelhochdeutschen Literatur. Aventiuren*, 11 (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2016); Bettina Bildhauer, "Mourning and Violence: Kriemhild's Incorporated Memory," in *Women and Death: Representations of Female Victims and Perpetrators in German Culture 1500–2000 (Studies in German Literature Linguistics and Culture)*, ed. Helen Fronius and Anna Linton (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2008); Jerold C. Frakes, "Kriemhild's

points out, it is at this point that the narrator foreshadows “dass Kriemhild ‘eins vil guoten rîters wîp’ werde und dass eben jener ‘der selbe valke’ sei, ‘den si in ir troume sach’”¹³⁴ (“He was indeed that same falcon that she had seen in her dream, the one her mother had told her about”).¹³⁵ At this point, the narrator also reveals the larger outcome of Siegfried’s fate: “wie sêre si daz rach / an ir næsten mâgen, / die in sluogen sint! / durch sîn eines sterben / starp vil maneger muoter kint”¹³⁶ (“The revenge she was to exact on her dearest family members, those who murdered him, was terrible. His death would bring with it the demise of countless men”).¹³⁷

When Siegfried enters Kriemhild’s reality, it becomes clear that he is the falcon of her dreams – and that he is fated to death, as are the men who will be lost in battle without him.¹³⁸ Alfred ten Katen separates the representation of dreams in the minnesongs into three categories of narrative focalization: either the dream’s meaning is shared with the recipient (Parzival’s dream), with the figures themselves (Marjodo’s dream in *Tristan and Isolde*), or it is shared simultaneously with the figure and the reader (Kriemhild’s dreams). Ten Katen notes that, significantly, only women are confronted with ‘warning dreams’ in the *Nibelungenlied* – something of a cliché in the Middle High German epic – and that they are more or less universally ignored by the men they try to warn. Kriemhild in fact has three dreams that she interprets as omens predicting Siegfried’s death. The falcon dream is of course the first of these. According to Irmgard Gephart, the dream gives us an “Einblick in eine separate Frauenwelt der Kemenate” (a

Three Dreams: a Structural Interpretation,” *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*. Vol. 113.3 (1984): 173–187; George Nordmeyer, “Source Studies on Kriemhild’s Falcon Dream,” *The Germanic Review* 15.4 (1940): 224–29.

134 Alfred ten Katen, “Die Träume Kriemhilds – Analyse und Vergleich.” *Nibelungenlied-Gesellschaft*, 2008): http://www.nibelungenlied-gesellschaft.de/03_beitrag/katen/ten-katen.html (last accessed on Dec. 12, 2018), n.p. Published online. The original Middle High German text is here quoted from *Das Nibelungenlied nach der Handschrift C*, ed. Ursula Hennig. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 83 (Tübingen, Max Niemayer Verlag, 1977), vv. 17–18.

135 *The Nibelungenlied*, trans. Whobrey (see note 126), 3, v. 18.

136 *Das Nibelungenlied*, ed. Reichert (see note 125), 46, v. 17.

137 *Das Nibelungenlied*, ed. Reichert (see note 125), 46, v. 19; Whobrey, *The Nibelungenlied* (see note 126), 3, v. 18.

138 Cf. *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, ed. Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli, Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978), Vol. 2, 1156. entry on Falke: “Im deutschen M.A. wird oft der Held oder insbesondere der Geliebte mit einem F.n. verglichen, so im Nibelungenlied (Str. 13f.), bei dem Kürenberger (Minnesangs Frühling 8, 33ff.), Dietmar von Eist (ebd. 37, 4ff.), in dem Liederbuch der Clara Hätzlerin (I, Nr. 41) u.a., wie auch im Altertum Herrscher F.n. heißen oder mit ihnen verglichen werden.”

view into the separate womens' world of the *zenana*).¹³⁹ For Gephart, the world of "träumende Frauen" (dreaming women) is distinguished from that of "glanzvolle Ritter" (splendid knights), which represents "ein Maximum an Macht und Würde" (a maximum of power and dignity).¹⁴⁰ Thus, the dream portrays the "Geschlechterdrama der höfisch-kriegerischen Welt" (the gender drama of the courtly-warring world) in an image of wildness and taming.¹⁴¹ In a predominantly male world, "die keine Angst und keine Furcht kennt, die dem Programm höfischer Ehre und Freude verpflichtet ist," (that knows no fear and that is pledged to the program of courtly honor and happiness) the woman takes "die Funktion der Ahnenden" (the function of the prophet): Kriemhild reveals the hidden outcome of the future.¹⁴²

Kriemhild has a second "Tiertraum" ("animal dream"), which she tells her husband Siegfried:

lât iuwer jagen sîn!
 mir tuomte hînat,
 wie zwei wildiu swîn
 jageten über heide,
 dâ wurden bluomen rô.
 daz ich sô sêre weine,
 des gât mir wærlîche nô.
 Ich fûhrte harte sêre
 etelîchen râ,
 ob man der deheinem
 missedienet hât,
 die uns gefüegen können
 vîentlîchen haz.
 belîbet, lieber hêrre!
 mit rehten triuwen râ ich daz"¹⁴³

["Don't go on this hunt! I had a nightmare last night. Two wild boars were running across the fields and all the flowers turned red. I can't help crying about it. I am terrified that something is going to happen. Who knows if we have insulted one of them so that they have some reason to hate us. Please stay, dear sir, that is my faithful wish"].¹⁴⁴

139 Irmgard Gephart, *Der Zorn der Nibelungen: Rivalität und Rache im "Nibelungenlied"* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2005), 15

140 Gephart, *Zorn der Nibelungen* (see note 139), 15.

141 Gephart, *Zorn der Nibelungen* (see note 139), 15.

142 Gephart, *Zorn der Nibelungen* (see note 139), 17.

143 *Das Nibelungenlied*, ed. Reichert (see note 125), 151, vv. 918–19.

144 *The Nibelungenlied*, trans. Whobrey (see note 126) 78, vv. 921–22.

He tells her that he trusts her kin, who are gracious to him, and that he has no reason to fear, whereupon she tells him of yet another dream: “Neinâ, hêre Sîvrit! / jâ fûhrt ich dînen val! / mir troumte hînte leide, / wie ob dir ze tal / vielen zwêne berge. / ine gesach dich nimmêr mê. / wil dû von mir scheiden, / daz tuot mir an dem herzen wê”¹⁴⁵ (“No, Lord Siegfried, I foresee your death! I had another dream last night, how two mountains came crashing down on you, and you disappeared from my sight. If you leave me, it will break my heart”).¹⁴³

As ten Katen explains, Siegfried’s dismissive-yet-affectionate reaction to her dreams’ foretelling is something of a tradition, and comes to occur in the *Nibelungenlied* among other reasons because Kriemhild does not trust herself to tell Siegfried “dass der grimmige Hagen seine verwundbare Stelle kennt.”¹⁴⁶ But the blame is not all hers, for, as ten Katen argues, Siegfried “kann oder will nicht sehen, dass unter der Oberfläche der Hass schwelt.”¹⁴⁷ The two murderers appear in the three dreams as eagles, boars, and mountains, but the victim is only a falcon in the first dream; in the second two, it is Siegfried himself. It is clear that Kriemhild recognizes Hagen as a potential murderer, but it is unclear if she had imagined her brother to be the second. Other noteworthy dreams are Yrkane’s dream concerning Reinfried’s impending endangerment in *Reinfried von Braunschweig* (late thirteenth century), and also a dream in the German version of *Solomon and Marcolf* (late twelfth century, printed 1499/1510).

Salman und Morolf is a Spielmann epic, predating the *Minnesang* and *Höfische Epik*¹⁴⁸ and incorporating Arabic and Hebrew sources¹⁴⁹; it contains a noteworthy parallel to Kriemhild’s falcon dream. The Spielmann genre of the twelfth century was centered around entertainment,¹⁵⁰ and one certainly sees this in the dynamic character of *Morolf*.¹⁵¹ Josef Magedanz argues that this tale is something

145 *Das Nibelungenlied*, ed. Reichert (see note 125), 151, v. 921.

143 Whobrey, *The Nibelungenlied* (see note 126), 78, v. 924.

146 ten Katen, “Die Träume Kriemhilds – Analyse und Vergleich” (see note 134), n.p.

147 ten Katen, “Die Träume Kriemhilds – Analyse und Vergleich” (see note 134), n.p.

148 First printed under the title *Dis buch seit von kunig salomon vnd siner huß frouwen Salome wie sy der künig fore nam vnd wie sy Morolff künig salomon brüder wider brocht* in Strasbourg by Matthias Hupfuff in 1499.

149 See “*Salman und Morolf*: An English Translation with Introduction,” trans. Josef H. Magedanz. Ph.D. diss. Lincoln, Nebraska, 1994, “Introduction,” 8.

150 *Salman und Morolf*: An English Translation with Introduction, trans. Magedanz (see note 149), 40.

151 Magedanz considers the possibility of “a composition date prior to 1187 [...] based on the political situation in Jerusalem, that is, still in Christian hands, before its recapture by Saladin.” *Salman und Morolf*: An English Translation with Introduction (see note 149), 16. Edyta Polczynska also argues for an earlier date based on stylistic features, including dialogical form of the work’s

of an exception, as other Spielmann epics feature “storms at sea and encounters with strange beasts living on islands to provide elements of excitement and adventure.”¹⁵² *Salman and Morolf* in contrast reflects more of an interest “in the discussion and interpersonal contact among the characters, the exchange of ideas and displays of verbal skill than a more physical, action-oriented kind of entertainment.”¹⁵³ In the tale, Salman’s mischievous and traitorous wife, Salome, who continuously plots against him with other kings and love interests, convinces him to spare her life with the help of an interpretation of a dream she claims to have had. After running away with the heathen King Fore, who has been caught and faces execution, Salome tells Salman that she has foreseen her giving birth to his first son. In *Salman und Morolf*, we read:

Do sprach die frouwe wunnesam:
 “Salmon, ich solt dir sagen ein troum.
 mir ist getröimet in dirre nacht,
 das ich an dinem arme schlieff
 und mir so liebe nie geschach.
 Czwen valken schwungen
 flugen mir uff min hant.
 der troum ist mir wol bekant.
 das sol sin ein sun löbelich.
 herre, der sol noch besiczen
 din vil werdes künigrich. “
 Do sprach Morolff der ußerwelte tegan:
 ”den troum wil ich dir widerwegen.
 Es ist ein wite eichin,
 dar czü ein hoher galge,
 der zweier soltu sicher sin. “¹⁵⁴

[The glorious lady said, “Salman, let me tell you my dream. I dreamt last night that I slept in your arms and that we loved as never before. Two falcons flew down to my hand. I know very well the meaning of this dream: it signifies a praiseworthy son, sire, who will inherit your most worthy kingdom.” Morolf the outstanding warrior said, “I will interpret this

composition as well as the vocabulary used including pre-courtly terms such as ‘degen’ and ‘recke,’ which appear more frequently than ‘ritter.’ Edyta Polcynska, *Studien zum “Salman und Morolf”* (Poznań: UAM, 1968), 35, 37. Michael Curschmann similarly dates the tale to the second half of the twelfth century, presumably in the Rhine region. “Salman und Morolf,” *Verfasserlexikon: Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. Kurt Ruh, Gundolf Keil, Werner Schröder, Burghart Wachinger, and Franz Josef Worstbrock. Vol. 8.2 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1977), 515–18; here 515.

152 *Salman und Morolf*, trans. Magedanz (see note 149), 24.

153 *Salman und Morolf*, trans. Magedanz (see note 149), 25.

154 *Salman und Morolf*, trans. Magedanz (see note 149), 173, vv. 534–36.

dream differently: the dream signified a broad oak tree, as well as a high gallows. You can be certain of both”].¹⁵⁵

Morolf, having grown tired of constantly risking his life and men in battles to retrieve Salome for Salman, sees nothing in the dream and wants to eliminate her as a problem for himself and for Salman, but Salman’s obsession with Salome is his inevitable character flaw. Salman, like Gunther in the *Nibelungenlied*, is indecisive.¹⁵⁶ Thus, Salman spares her, despite further warnings from Morolf:

Salmon lachen do began.
 er sprach: “Morolff, hab dir den heideschen man
 und las mir das wunder schone wip.
 das wil ich, tegen edele, iemer verdienen umb dinen lip.
 Sie hat mir des ir truwe gegeben,
 si wolle stette iemer pflegen
 und wil es ouch getuon iemer mer.
 ich wil si bas versuochen,
 ich wil si mit mir furen uber se.”
 Morolff sprach: “kunig, das
 ist under czwein
 und ist der wandel nu das ein.
 fürestu si mit dir uber se,
 so gib ich dir des min truwe,
 sie schendet und schedigot uns noch me.”¹⁵⁷

[Salman began to laugh and said, “Morolf, take the heathen and leave me the wonderfully beautiful woman. I will always be indebted to you for this. She has given me her word that she will always be constant. I intend to test her further and will take her across the sea with me.” Morolf said, “Sire, surely as night follows day, if you take her across the sea, I give you my word of honor, she will disgrace and harm us even more”].¹⁵⁸

Incidentally, Salome does indeed bear Salman a son, but it is of course uncertain whether she actually had the dream that she told him of, or whether she simply

155 *Salman und Morolf*, trans. Magedanz (see note 149), 173.

156 Magedanz calls this the “weak king motif” in medieval works. *Salman und Morolf: an English Translation with Introduction* (see note 149), 34. There are also similarities to other medieval tales. Hendrik Kroes finds similarities with Chrétien de Troyes’s *Cligés*, including the desired bride taking a potion that allows her to appear dead, molten metal poured through the hand to try to prove she is still alive, and the woman being taken from her coffin and brought to a tower with a secret entrance. Hendrik Kroes, “Zum mhd. *Salman und Morolf*,” *Neophilologus* 30.2 (1946): 58–63; here 61.

157 *Salman und Morolf*, trans. Magedanz (see note 149), 174, vv. 537–39.

158 *Salman und Morolf*, trans. Magedanz (see note 149), 174.

remained true to him long enough to bear him a son in-between lovers (and there is no proof that it is Salman's child).¹⁵⁹

There is a second instance of a falcon in the story, in this case a description of Morolf that depicts his physical attractiveness:

Die maget hup sich von dannen zu hant
in die burg, da sie die kunigin fant.
sie sprach: "vil edele kunigin, es ist uff den hoff komen der aller schonste bilgerin.
Es ist der aller schonster man,
den ie kein frauwe ie gewan.
ja es burnent im die augin sin
vil schone in sinem heubte als einem wilden felckelin.
... "

[The maiden then proceeded immediately to the castle, where she found the queen and said, "Noble highness, the most handsome of all pilgrims has come to court, and he is the most handsome man a woman could ever have. His eyes sparkle so beautifully, just like those of a small, untamed falcon. ..."]¹⁶⁰

Morolf's wildness is both the key to his craftiness and also the more demonic side of his character.¹⁶¹ He is Salman's loyal brother, a strategic planner, and a good leader of men. In other instances, Morolf's behavior is far more base, for example, he occasionally kills many men without reason or remorse.¹⁶² In addition, Magedanz notes that Morolf relies twice on flatulence to get himself out of trouble, including once after wagering his life on the outcome of a chess game with Salome, and describes this as a "style accepted (and presumably enjoyed) by the work's author and audience"¹⁶³ This was a popular form of joke both be-

159 Tina Boyer further considers this "ethical dilemma" in terms of religious affiliations of characters "Murder and Morality in *Salman und Morolf*," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 115.1 (2016): 39–69; here 39.

160 *Salman und Morolf*, trans. Magedanz (see note 149), 141, vv. 404–05.

161 In her article "The Function of Knowledge and Magic in *Salman und Morolf*," Dobozy refers to Morolf as a "demonic or dark figure" (28) who has assumed the role of "the evil demon" (27). Morolf's possession of the "purely evil nature of Aschmedai" renders him an "ambiguous character having both the positive and negative potential of a dark figure." Maria Dobozy, "The Function of Knowledge and Magic in *Salman and Morolf*," *The Dark Figure in Medieval German and Germanic Literature*, ed. Edward Haymes and Stephanie Can van D'Elden. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 448 (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1986), 27–41.

162 Magedanz notes that other Middle High German figures "kill to solve perceived or real problems," for example, "Hagen in the *NL* kills Siegfried because he perceives him to be a political threat to the Burgundians," and "Tristan kills Morolt because he represents a real threat to King Mark." *Salman und Morolf*, trans. Magedanz (see note 149), 26–27.

163 *Salman und Morolf* trans. Magedanz (see note 149), 27.

fore and after the epic time of the Spielmann.¹⁶⁴ Salome's character is similarly ambiguous, with a "contradiction between her outer beauty and inner virtue."¹⁶⁵ As Joachim Bumke describes it, Salome's beauty is a "fixed ideal," characterized by blonde hair, a white forehead, glowing eyes, small ears, a straight nose, rosy cheeks, a red mouth, white teeth, a round chin, and a beautiful neck.¹⁶⁶ Salome's falcon dream, however, is not present in the Latin or Old English versions of the tale and thus reflects a specifically German literary tradition; it may have perhaps influenced Kriemhild's falcon dream in the *Nibelungenlied*.

While the falcons in the dream which the woman relates to Salman seem precariously tame, in the *Nibelungenlied* Kriemhild's more active role in the falcon taming signals her integral role in determining Siegfried's fate – by either protecting him or (unconsciously) betraying him. In training the falcon for the hunt, Kriemhild assumes a nontraditional, masculine-coded identity in her dream, in comparison to her generally passive role (especially considering her attempts to warn Siegfried of his fate). In the dream, it is not the falcon that flies to Kriemhild, but rather she who calls the falcon to her. Ten Katen considers how Kriemhild is shocked by the "erkrimmen" of the falcon, and explains that in Matthias Lexer's *Handwörterbuch* "erkrimmen" is translated as "zerkratzen (mit Schnabel, Klauen, Nägeln)" – and here Lexer is also directly referencing the *Nibelungenlied*.¹⁶⁷ Kriemhild's following dreams continue to predict the same fate for Siegfried, but with a different allegorical manifestation. Kriemhild herself is partially to blame for Siegfried's fate, because she unwittingly betrays his weakness to Hagen; nonetheless, Siegfried ignores her vague warnings that someone in the court wants to do him harm, and with a dismissive "*minneclîchem chusse*" he meets her "*schoenen lîp*." Thus Kriemhild does not achieve the influence or power in reality that her unconsciousness might desire, as reflected in her falcon dream.

The phenomenon of women's independence in connection to falconry is not exclusive to German literature. Almond discusses two fourteenth-century prayer books that contain scenes of women hawking. He discusses three scenes in *Queen Mary's Psalter* (fourteenth century), which depict women both on horseback and on foot who are "flying their falcons at wild duck and herons which have been flushed from cover by small hound."¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ See the chapter in this volume by Allison Coudert.

¹⁶⁵ *Salman und Morolf*, trans. Magedanz (see note 149), 30.

¹⁶⁶ Joachim Bumke, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur im hohen Mittelalter*. Vol. II (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1990), 452. Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (see note 5), 39.

¹⁶⁷ Alfred ten Katen, "Die Träume Kriemhilds – Analyse und Vergleich" (see note 134).

¹⁶⁸ *Queen Mary's Psalter*, 64–65, quoted in Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (see note 5), 160.

In *The Taymouth Hours* (ca. 1325–1349), an illustrated manuscript from England, there is an entire section which depicts women engaged in hunting sports. Most of the illustrations of ladies hawking depict solitary women rather than groups. The scenes consist of “falconry practice,” as Almond details: “a lady of rank putting up duck from a fountain by beating a gong; flying a peregrine at duck; her bird striking the prey; using a lure of feathers to bring in her falcon after an unsuccessful flight; rewarding the bird with a gobbet of meat; perching the falcon; and, finally, proudly showing off the quarry, a duck, to another lady.”¹⁶⁹ The women depicted in these images are young and possibly unmarried, and appear to be flying goshawks at close range from the hand/fist (hawking), rather than using a lady’s merlin to attack skylarks at long range (falconry).

Conclusion

The falcon need not always represent a hawk-like warrior or a metaphorical anthropomorphism of the lover capable of ripping one’s heart from one’s chest and flying away with it – on the contrary, the falcon was also a symbol of peace in Middle High German literature. For example, sent as a dispatch, the falcon could symbolize a peaceful visit, as in *Biterolf und Dietleib* in the *Deutsches Heldenbuch I*¹⁷⁰ – or in the *Deutsches Heldenbuch IV*, the Empress Sidrat, for example, “sends Hartman as her messenger to Wolfdietrich, and gives him a falcon to ensure his safe conduct.”¹⁷¹ The hawk itself also symbolizes a messenger or a message, especially the sparrow-hawk. Here, one recalls Der von Kürenberger’s “Falkenlied” once again. The sparrow-hawk is also the messenger in Wolfram’s *Parzival*, Der Pleier’s *Garel vom blühenden Tal* (ca. 1260–1280), and Johann von Würzburg’s *Wilhelm von Österreich* (1472/74).¹⁷² In *Parzival*, Prince Gurnemanz sends his messenger bird into the air:

Dô warf der fürste mære
einen müzersperwære
von der hende. in die burc er swanc.
ein guldin schelle dran erklac.
daz was ein bote.

¹⁶⁹ Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (see note 5), 160.

¹⁷⁰ Dalby, *Lexicon of the Mediaeval German Hunt* (see note 30), xxviii.

¹⁷¹ Dalby, *Lexicon of the Mediaeval German Hunt* (see note 30), xxviii.

¹⁷² See Dalby, *Lexicon of the Mediaeval German Hunt* (see note 30), xxxi.

Dô quam *im sîn*
vil junchêren wolgetân.¹⁷³

[“Then the renowned prince cast a yearling sparrowhawk from his hand. Into the castle it soared, its golden bell tinkling. This was a messenger – immediately there came towards him many handsome squires.”]¹⁷⁴

Falcons also symbolize the peaceful union of a wedding; for example in Hartmann von Aue’s “Erec(k)” (ca. 1185) they represent the harmonious marriage of Erec and Enite, and in Heinrich von dem Türlin’s *Diu Crône* (ca. 1220s) they are associated with the wedding at Arthur’s court.¹⁷⁵ Above I have already discussed examples of historical documents that record the gifting of falcons between nobles, such as the *Marienburger Tresslerbuch*.

By the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, there were no restrictions on the possession of hawks or falcons, and it appears likely that the sport reached its zenith in England at that time, paralleling the emergence of the new Tudor gentry out of the upper yeomanry. Shakespeare was certainly aware and conversant with the vocabulary, care, and methodology of hawking, as is indicated by Petruchio in *Taming of the Shrew*, written 1593/1594.¹⁷⁶ Falconry declined more in the seventeenth century due to the popularity of firearms, among other factors. In all cases, taming of a wild beast in the Middle Ages often develops into a taming of the self – the birds of the tales examined here resist taming, but are open to friendship with humans. The knight (or courtly lady) transcends courtly boundaries, while at the same time bringing the wild animal nearer to the courtly realm of domestication.

While most hawkers or falconers did not take up this activity for exploration of the self, but rather, for social and economic reasons, the tamed falcon nonetheless comes to symbolize the taming of the self in the German texts I have considered from the High Middle Ages. In the German literature of the Middle Ages, the taming of falcons and wild beasts serves as a means to deconstruct boundaries between culture and nature, and to explore liminal identities. In a way, this reflected the contemporary reality, in which the taming of a falcon was a task of patience, and the gifting of a falcon was a gesture of peace. In medieval German literature, the falcon may embody the hero, and the metaphor often further ennobles his demeanor or actions. Though, as we see in Wolfram von Eschenbach, the metaphor can also be used to criticize or poke fun at a knight. In medieval

173 *Parzival*, ed. Bumke (see note 43), 144, vv. 4847–52.

174 *Parzival*, trans. Edwards (see note 44), 69–70.

175 See Dalby, *Lexicon of the Mediaeval German Hunt* (see note 30), xxviii.

176 See Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (see note 5), 47.

love relationships, there is often a tension between love and independence, symbolized by a falcon's taming and conversely its being set free. This takes an especially playful form in Dietrich von der Glezze's *Der Borte*. Lastly, the falcon metaphor takes on new significance when it is more directly related to a woman. Though still factoring as one member of a relationship, the falcon's significance in the dreams of Kriemhild and Salome, for example, transcends the role of the woman in the relationship, and comes to represent the greater social role that the woman both assumes and resists, and the struggles that come along with this.

Alan V. Murray

Tourney, Joust, Foreis and Round Table: Tournament Forms in the *Frauendienst* of Ulrich von Liechtenstein

I. Introduction

In the year 1225 Ludwig IV, Landgrave of Thuringia (d. 1227), led an attack against the fortified town of Lebus in Lower Lusatia (Ger. Niederlausitz), which at that time was garrisoned by Polish forces. The chronicle of the abbey of Reinhardsbrunn relates that when the town was taken and the spoils were divided, by common consent the landgrave's knights held a *tornamentum quod iusta appellatur* ("tournament which is called a joust"). Despite its brevity, this account reveals some significant points about the event that took place on August 16. It was held only once the siege was ended and all business associated with it was concluded; there was thus a clear demarcation between warfare and the leisure activity which followed it. Indeed, the tournament may have been intended as a conciliatory gesture on the part of the landgrave, as a later source claims that his knights had initially been unwilling to join the attack, since at that time Thuringia was at peace with the Poles.¹

The terminology employed by the chronicler is also revealing. The word *torn(e)amentum* was a Latin neologism derived from Old French (OFr.) *tournoi*, reflecting the origins of the tournament in northern France in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, but the term was clearly known in Thuringia in the early thirteenth century, an indication of how far the practice of tournaments had spread by this time.² However, the Reinhardsbrunn chronicler seems obliged

1 "Chronica Reinhardsbrunnensis," *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores* 30/1, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger at al. (Hanover: Hahn, 1896), 602: "presentato igitur castro spoliisque divis, milites consensu unanimi tornamentum quod iusta appellatur condixerunt, quod celebratum est VIII. mense, XVI. die ipsius mensis." On the political context of the attack on Lebus, see Christine Reinle, "Violence, Feud, and Peacemaking," *The Origins of the German Principalities, 1100–1350: Essays by German Historians*, ed. Graham A. Loud and Jochen Schenk (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 181–204; here 191–92.

2 Michel Parisse, "Le tournoi en France, des origines à la fin du XIIIe siècle," *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter: Beiträge zu einer vergleichenden Formen- und Verhaltensgeschichte des Rit-*

to explain the name of the particular form of tournament held at Lebus with a term which he evidently thought would be unfamiliar to his readers; *iusta* is a Latinization of Old French *joste* or *jouste*, but he was unsure how to write the word, since later in the chronicle he uses the alternative written form *ziost*.³ This phraseology suggests that, at least in the easternmost parts of the kingdom of Germany, the joust as a distinct form of tournament was still a relatively novel activity in the first quarter of the thirteenth century.⁴ The aim of this essay is to investigate the development of different and distinct forms of the tournament from this time onwards by evaluating the evidence of one of the most detailed testimonies of early tournament practices in the German-speaking lands.

II. Tournament Forms in the Twelfth Century

Ask any member of the general public in Europe or North America today to describe a medieval tournament, and in the vast majority of cases they would reply with a description of a *joust*: that is, a series of combats between pairs of mounted knights charging against each other with lances held under the right arm, with the aim of unhorsing the opponent or at least striking a blow on him, and continuing for a number of courses determined by prior agreement or by the incapacity of either party. Additional detail may well be forthcoming (probably drawing on impressions created by the Hollywood film industry): cheering spectators in decorated grandstands, trumpeters playing and heralds directing the proceedings, and a high status figure (usually a ruler or a noble lady)

tertums, ed. Josef Fleckenstein. Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 80 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 175–211; here 182.

³ “Chronica Reinhardsbrunnensis” (see note 1), 608. As the cases of Hartmann von Aue and Ulrich von Liechtenstein shall demonstrate, the forms *tjost* and *tyost* also became popular in German vernacular, especially in southern German texts. These orthographic variations in Latin and German illustrate how different writers attempted to reproduce the OFr. phoneme /ʒ/ (written as <ʒ>), which did not exist in the German sound system.

⁴ On the origins of the tournament and its terminology, see Parisse, “Le tournoi en France, des origines à la fin du XIII^e siècle,” *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter* (see note 2), 175–211; Josef Fleckenstein, “Das Turnier als höfisches Fest im hochmittelalterlichen Deutschland,” *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter*, 229–56; William Henry Jackson, “Das Turnier in der deutschen Dichtung des Mittelalters,” *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter*, 257–95; David Crouch, *Tournament* (London and New York: Hambledon and London, 2005), 10–16.

ready to present a prize to the victor.⁵ The parallels with modern sporting events are obvious, and it is no coincidence that knock-out competitions in many sports today are often referred to as tournaments. Yet despite its firm place in the modern popular imagination, the joust was a relatively late development in the wider history of the tournament. The original tournament form as it had developed by the early twelfth century was the *tourney* (OFr. *tournois*, MHG *turnei*) or *mêlée*, a mass combat in which two opposing forces, each consisting of dozens or sometimes even hundreds of mounted knights, fought over a large area over the best part of a day.

The tourney emerged as a result of changes in knightly weaponry and tactics occurring at the end of the eleventh century. Until this time, when knights on horseback fought with spears they grasped them overarm to fight with a thrusting or stabbing motion. Around the year 1100, knights developed the new technique of holding the spear couched, that is, held tightly under their right arm, and charging while aiming it at the enemy's torso; sitting secure in his saddle which had a high cantle and pommel, the knight could harness the speed and weight of his horse to strike his opponent and even knock him to the ground. This technique caught on so rapidly that the spear (a basic, straight wooden shaft with a metal point) soon gave way to the lance, whose metal point was mounted on a more substantial shaft incorporating a circular protection for the hand (a vamplate); it was longer, thicker and heavier than the spear and thus gave the knight a greater reach and force. The use of the lance was most effective when a group of knights advanced in a very close formation, speeding up to a gallop for the final part of the charge but keeping abreast so that the impact of the entire group was delivered simultaneously. A charge which was performed well had a good chance of breaking through or even dispersing an enemy formation and could thus secure a great initial advantage in any combat.⁶ The mass tourney fought between two opposing armies was thus an activity in which two important military skills could be practiced in peacetime: maintaining

5 One such influence on modern perceptions is the motion picture *A Knight's Tale* (Tristar Pictures, 2001), which contains most of the features mentioned above as well as many unhistorical details in its portrayal of jousting, including an anachronistic Ulrich von Liechtenstein.

6 Helmut Nickel, "The Tournament: An Historical Sketch," *The Study of Chivalry: Resources and Approaches*, ed. Howell Chickering and Thomas H. Seiler (Kalamazoo MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1988), 213–62; Rosemary Ascherl, "The Technology of Chivalry in Reality and Romance", *The Study of Chivalry*, 263–311.

close and orderly formation while delivering a charge as well as reforming after formations had broken up or retreated away from the enemy.⁷

Tourneys continued to be held until the end of the Middle Ages, but by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they had been overtaken in popularity by the joust, which by that time had evolved into diverse and often increasingly elaborate forms. Jousts were normally staged as a series of one-on-one combats, in which the entire knightly company and other spectators could observe the prowess of pairs of opponents at a relatively close distance. Participants in the joust could thus win renown more easily than in the relatively confused fighting of the mass tourney. One might well argue that for male noblemen of the late medieval West, jousting was probably the most popular leisure pursuit after hunting. Yet it is still unclear when, why, and in what circumstances the joust was established as a individual event separate from the tourney.

As their Middle High German vocabulary shows, most tournament practices and styles were based on originally French innovations.⁸ It is accepted that the first complete description of a tournament in German occurs in the romance *Erec*, composed around 1180/1190 by the knight Hartmann von Aue. Although Hartmann's work is an adaptation of the French *Erec et Enide* by Chrétien de Troyes, his description of a tourney is four times the length of the episode given by Chrétien, suggesting that he was familiar enough with contemporary German tournament practices to be able to elaborate on his source with confidence. Hartmann came from Swabia, the duchy covering south-western Germany, and although his patrons cannot be established with certainty, it is likely that he was active in western areas of the kingdom, which would have been most receptive to practices already current in France and the Low Countries.⁹ In this description, the verb *tjostieren* is used repeatedly, even though the event being described is a tourney. The explanation would seem to be that the term is here used specifically to refer to individual combats between two named knights within the

7 This feature seems to explain the derivation of the terms *tournoi* and Latin *torneamentum* from the OFr. verb *torner*, meaning "turn" or "revolve." Crouch, *Tournament* (see note 4), 3, argues that the word *torneamentum* "was therefore newly coined to describe the sharp turn made by the knights after the charge to swing around and engage their opponents with swords." This is of course plausible, but in the light of the significance of units maintaining their formation I think it is more likely that the element of turning derived from the need for knights to reform their lines after the initial impact and turn to face the enemy for another charge.

8 Ulrich Mölk, "Philologische Aspekte des Turniers," *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter* (see note 2), 163–74.

9 William Henry Jackson, *Chivalry in Twelfth-Century Germany: The Works of Hartmann von Aue*. Arthurian Studies (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 26–27, 103–07; Jackson, "Das Turnier in der deutschen Dichtung des Mittelalters" (see note 4), 259–61.

wider contest.¹⁰ While the tourney in *Erec* and its French original is a literary invention, it seems to mirror actual practices in twelfth-century warfare. In his account of the English civil war between the Empress Mathilda and King Stephen, the chronicler William of Malmesbury gives a description of fighting between the armies of Stephen and Robert, Earl of Gloucester, in 1141:

Temptavere primo pro ludium pugne facere, quod iustam vocant, quia tali periti erant arte: at ubi viderunt quod consulares, ut ita dictum sit, non lanceis eminus, set gladiis cominus rem gererent, et infestis viribus vexillisque aciem regalem perurperent, fuga sibi omnes ad unum comites consulvere.¹¹

[The royalists at first attempted to carry out the prelude to battle which is called “jousting”, because they were experienced in this art: but when they saw that the earl’s men, as one might call them, were not fighting at a distance with lances, but at close quarters with swords, they – well arrayed and with banners flying – broke through the royalist formation, so that all of the earls fled for safety as if as one].

This description is not entirely clear, but it does suggest that while some of the royalists were expecting to engage in individual skirmishing, Earl Robert’s forces maintained a tight formation and closed rapidly to break through the royalist lines. Jousting between individuals occurred not only in warfare but also in the mass tourney, especially at the commencement of the fighting. This is most evident in the *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, an anonymous Anglo-Norman poem telling of the life of William Marshal, Lord of Striguil and Earl of Pembroke (ca. 1147–1219), who as a young man spent many years as a professional tourneyer. It tells how, at a tourney held at Joigny in northern France, the two sides approached each other: *ja venoient li josteor. / Cil qui se font avanceor / De commençailles comencier* [At this point the jousters rode up, those who were in the front rank of the initial contests].¹²

The poem goes on to describe how William Marshal, trusting in his “firm and sturdy lance,” knocked one of these jousts off his horse and led the animal off as booty. These opening combats, known in French as *jostes de pladiences* or

¹⁰ *Erec von Hartmann von Aue*, ed. Albert Lietzmann. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 39 (Halle a. d. S.: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1939), lines 2222–807 (pp. 58–73).

¹¹ *The Historia Novella by William of Malmesbury*, trans. K. R. Potter (London and New York: Thomas Nelson, 1955), 49 (my translation, A. V. M.).

¹² *History of William Marshal*, ed. Anthony J. Holden, trans. Stewart Gregory, notes by David Crouch. Anglo-Norman Text Society Occasional Publications Series, 4. 3 vols. (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2002–2006), lines 3499–501. On William’s life and career as a tourneyer, see David Crouch, *William Marshal: Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire, 1147–1219* (London and New York: Longman, 1990), 26–52.

commençaillies, seem to have occurred when individual knights advanced ahead of the ordered formations, in the hope of engaging with opponents from the other side in single combat. They thus offered a chance for individuals to gain glory by having their deeds noticed by all, in a way that would be less obvious once the two opposing formations had charged each other and broken up into confused hand-to-hand fighting. However, some commanders evidently frowned on the practice of jousting, for the poem also mentions cases where the *commençaillies* were forbidden because they tended to act against the demands of discipline. Thus at a tournament held between the villages of Sainte-Jamme and Valennes, the poet describes how the formations advanced:

Puis chivalchierent li conrei
Sereement e sanz desrei.
E saciez que devant les lices
N'out pas jostes de pladeïces,
Nen I out mot de plaidier,
For del tot perdre ou gaannier.¹³

[Then the companies rode forward
in tight and ordered formation.
And I can tell you that in front of the lists
this was no formal joust;
there was not a single word of argument spoken
except of winning or losing all.]

The practice of jousting at the commencement of battle was also known in the German-speaking lands. The Germanist Martin H. Jones has drawn attention to a passage in Wolfram von Eschenbach's epic poem *Willehalm* (composed ca. 1220), in which the Middle High German word *tjostiure* (clearly derived from the Old French word for jousts) is applied to a narrative of a battle between Christians and Saracens, to describe the activity of individual knights who ride towards the enemy in advance of the tight formations of their own side in order to engage opponents in single combat.¹⁴ One can well imagine that the *commençaillies* offered opportunities to practice skills with the lance,

13 *History of William Marshal* (see note 12), lines 1307–12. A similar description is given at lines 3525–29: *Prist li mains hardiz cuer en sei / De veintre le jor de tornei, / Mais molt errent sage-ment / E rengié e sereement, / Qu'onques nuls n'en trespasa autre* [“... the least bold amongst them was emboldened to be the victor at the tournament that day, but, all the same, they rode along at a measured tread in close formation, not one of them advancing in front of the other”].

14 Martin H. Jones, “die tjostiure uz vünf scharn (*Willehalm* 362,3),” *Studien zu Wolfram von Eschenbach: Festschrift für Werner Schröder zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Kurt Gärtner and Joachim Heinze (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1989), pp. 429–41.

which would be the weapon used in an initial charge, whereas once formations broke up, lances would have been either broken or abandoned in favour of swords. Taken together, this evidence indicates that the word *joust* originally referred to a combat between individuals in both warfare and the tourney, and that it is only examples such as the jousting at Lebus in 1225 that show the joust beginning to emerge as a distinct tournament form in the early thirteenth century.

III. Ulrich von Liechtenstein and His Literary Work

Much of what we know about the practice of tournaments in the south-east of the Holy Roman Empire during the first half of the thirteenth century derives from the literary work of Ulrich von Liechtenstein, a *ministerialis*, knight and poet probably born between 1200 and 1210. Ulrich's life is relatively well recorded in 94 documentary sources, which attest to his political activity in the duchy of Styria and the surrounding territories from around 1227 until his death in 1275, particularly in his final decade, when he held the offices of marshal and *Land-richter* (chief magistrate) of Styria.¹⁵ He is best known to posterity for a work in Middle High German whose final strophe gives its title as *Vrowen dienst*, meaning "Service of Ladies" (*Frauendienst* in modern German). This is a narrative poem of 1850 strophes in romance form, which also contains many interpolated love songs, dance songs, reflective prose texts (*Büchlein*) and letters in both prose and verse.¹⁶ It is written from the perspective of a first-person narrator

15 Franz Viktor Spechtler, "Die Urkunden-Regesten zu Ulrich von Liechtenstein. Bemerkungen zu den Urkunden und zu einer Biographie Ulrichs von Liechtenstein," *Ich – Ulrich von Liechtenstein: Literatur und Politik im Mittelalter. Akten der Akademie Friesach "Stadt und Kultur im Mittelalter"*, Friesach (Kärnten), 2.–6. September 1996, ed. Franz Viktor Spechtler and Barbara Maier. Schriftenreihe der Akademie Friesach, 5 (Klagenfurt: Wieser Verlag, 1999), 441–93; John B. Freed, *Noble Bondsmen: Ministerial Marriages in the Archdiocese of Salzburg, 1100–1343* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 249–66. An overview of research on Ulrich and his work can be found in the two most comprehensive published bibliographies: Klaus M. Schmidt et al., "Bibliographie zu Ulrich von Liechtenstein," *Ich – Ulrich von Liechtenstein*, 495–509, and Sandra Linden, "Kommentierte Bibliographie zu Ulrich von Liechtenstein," *Ulrich von Liechtenstein: Leben – Zeit – Werk – Forschung*, ed. Sandra Linden and Christopher Young (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 535–86.

16 *Frauendienst* survives in a single complete manuscript (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cgm.44) and two fragments. The standard edition is *Ulrich von Liechtenstein, Frauendienst*, ed. Franz Viktor Spechtler, 2nd ed. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 485 (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 2003) [henceforth cited as *FD*, with numbering by strophe]. An English translation was

who is apparently to be identified with Ulrich himself: while it claims to be based on Ulrich's own life, it also contains many episodes which are clearly derived from the literary fashion of the time. For example, most of the work tells of Ulrich's chivalric adventures which were supposedly undertaken in his successive service of two unnamed ladies, although he had a wife and family at the time.

The "service of ladies" which is described in the work need not be taken literally, but can be understood as aspirational behaviour deriving from the literary conventions of the German love lyric (*Minnesang*), in which a knight attempts to gain the favour of an adored lady through chivalric deeds or poetry which praises her qualities. The ability to compose love poetry was considered to be an important accomplishment for a nobleman, and in his work Ulrich is clearly keen to show his abilities as a poet, not only of his overarching narrative, but of numerous examples of love lyric contained within it.¹⁷

The status of the *Frauendienst* as a literary work has changed considerably in the opinion of researchers, particularly since it shows few points of contact with the documentary record. When it first became known in the nineteenth century, the romance was regarded as a true account of Ulrich's life, but over the last century or so scholars have become more sceptical, tending to regard it as a piece of imaginative literature rather than an accurate autobiographical account.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the fact that Ulrich employs a literary form does not nec-

published as *Ulrich von Liechtenstein's Service of Ladies*, trans. John W. Thomas. University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures, 63 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1969). A "condensed form" of this work was published as *Ulrich von Liechtenstein's Service of Ladies*, trans. John W. Thomas, with an introduction by Kelly DeVries (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2004). Thomas attempted to render Ulrich's language in English verse, and the demands of meter and rhyme mean that the technicalities of tournament practice are sometimes translated very freely, and so in this essay I have chosen to give my own English translations.

17 Anthonius H. Touber, "Der literarische Charakter von Ulrich von Lichtensteins *Frauendienst*," *Neophilologus* 51 (1967): 253–62; John W. Thomas, "The Minnesong Structure of Ulrich von Liechtenstein's *Frauendienst*," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 102 (1973): 195–203.

18 Christopher Young, "Ulrich von Liechtenstein in German Literary History: The Don Quixote of the Steiermark," *Ulrich von Liechtenstein: Leben – Zeit – Werk – Forschung* (see note 15), 1–44; Volker Mertens, "Ulrich von Liechtenstein vom 17. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert," *Ulrich von Liechtenstein: Leben – Zeit – Werk – Forschung*, 515–34; Mark Chinca, "Der *Frauendienst* zwischen Fiktivität und Fiktionalität: Probleme und Perspektiven der Forschung," *Ulrich von Liechtenstein: Leben – Zeit – Werk – Forschung*, 305–23; Karina Kellermann, "Formen der Kommunikation. Zum Beispiel Ulrichs von Liechtenstein *Frauendienst*," *Wolfram-Studien*, XV: *Neue Wege der Mittelalter-Philologie. Landshuter Kolloquium 1996*, ed. Joachim Heinzle, L. Peter Johnson and Gisela Vollmann-Profe. Veröffentlichungen der Wolfram von Eschenbach-Gesellschaft (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1998), 324–43. Freed, *Noble Bondsmen* (see note 15), 251 points out that the

essarily mean that all elements within his narrative are untrue; rather, it may be regarded as a literary experiment produced at a time when true autobiography was in its infancy.¹⁹ Some historians point out that Ulrich names over 170 documented individuals, arguing that while the *Frauendienst* may well contain fictional elements, it is placed in a real historical framework.²⁰

In the many continuing debates about truth and fictionality in *Frauendienst* commentators have tended to lose sight of the fact that descriptions of tournaments not only make up the major part of the narrative, but that the principal means by which the first person narrator hoped to impress the ladies whom he claimed to serve was by winning distinction and fame at such events. This fact alone makes it important to understand the place of tournaments in the romance.²¹ Ulrich tells us that in his youth he was so fascinated by tournaments that he served at various events as a squire for three years in order to gain knowledge and experience before he was knighted, and so it is scarcely surprising that he was an enthusiastic participant in the following decades. The essential point, however, is that Ulrich's descriptions of tournaments had to sound convincing if they were to appear plausible. The romances of Hartmann von Aue or Wolfram von Eschenbach tell of imaginary heroes in far off lands. Unlike them, the *Frauendienst* contains no mentions of giants, dwarves, magicians or robber knights; it is set in a real landscape populated by real people, most of whom were known personally to its author and protagonist.

only events described which can be independently verified are the wedding of Agnes, daughter of Duke Leopold VI of Austria, to Duke Albrecht of Saxony (1222), and the death of Duke Frederick II of Austria (1246).

19 Albrecht Classen, "Autobiographische Diskurse als Identitätsexperimente in der Literatur des Spätmittelalters," *Ich – Ulrich von Liechtenstein* (see note 15), 177–204.

20 Heinz Dopsch, "Zwischen Dichtung und Politik. Herkunft und Umfeld Ulrichs von Liechtenstein," *Ich – Ulrich von Liechtenstein* (see note 15), 49–105; Gerald Krenn, "Historische Figuren und/oder Helden der Dichtung? Untersuchungen zu den Personen im Roman Frauendienst," *Ich – Ulrich von Liechtenstein*, 105–32; Sandra Linden, "Biographisches und Historisches: Eine Spurensuche zu Ulrich von Liechtenstein," *Ulrich von Liechtenstein: Leben – Zeit – Werk – Forschung* (see note 15), 45–98.

21 The only detailed investigation of tournaments in *Frauendienst* is to be found in the monograph by the Germanist Ursula Peters, *Frauendienst. Untersuchungen zu Ulrich von Liechtenstein und zum Wirklichkeitsgehalt der Minnedichtung*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 1971 (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1971), which, however, deals largely with two episodes, the so-called "Turnierfahrten" (tournament journeys), rather than giving a complete treatment of tournament practice. Discussion of Ulrich's work by historians of the tournament tends to be restricted and sketchy, as is the case, for example, with Richard Barber and Juliet Barker, *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1989), 49–52.

It is also notable that Ulrich's depiction of himself in the context of tournaments is far less idealised than it could have been. He is by no means an all triumphant hero; there are points in the story where he records jousts where his opponents landed blows on him, and as we shall see, he also records cases where events organised by him were concluded in a fashion which could only have been regarded as disappointing. While we must be wary of overinterpreting the *Frauendienst* as a kind of justification of Ulrich's political motivations, as Freed warns, it is reasonably safe to conclude that the work reveals a great deal about tournament practice in the south-eastern territories of the Holy Roman Empire in the first half of the thirteenth century.

What has been insufficiently discussed, I would argue, is the range of distinct tournament forms described in the work, and in what follows I will attempt to describe their characteristic features and advance reasons for their popularity.²² Each form will be treated roughly in the order in which it appears in *Frauendienst* (while concentrating on those accounts which provide the most detail), in order to give a sense of the evolution of tournament practice engaged in by Ulrich.

IV. The Tournaments at Friesach: *Foreis*, Joust, and Tourney

It is not surprising that most of the tournaments described in *Frauendienst* are examples of the original form, the mass tourney. Ulrich relates that, after being knighted, he took part in tourneys himself (*FD* 36–47). He was prepared to travel considerable distances, as he related:

Ich wart vil kurzlich wol bereit
mit orssen und mit wappencleit
und fuor mit freuden alzehant
gegen Kernden und gen Kreinlant
und danne gegen Ysterrich,
do het von Gorz der erenrich
in Triest ein ritterschaft geleit
durch sin vil hohe werdecheit. (*FD* 337)

²² Although it might be considered important to make a distinction between the historical figure of Ulrich von Liechtenstein and the first-person narrator of the *Frauendienst* who bears the same name, for simplicity's sake I will refer to both in the following discussion as Ulrich.

[Soon I was equipped
 with horses and surcoat
 and joyfully went straight away
 to Carinthia and Carniola
 and then to Istria,
 where the honourable count of Görz
 had organised a tournament in Trieste
 in a most admirable fashion.]

In the subsequent narrative it will become clear that Meinhard III, Count of Görz (d. 1258) was a keen patron of, and participant in tournaments, and Ulrich's encounters with the count serve to underscore his own reputation as a tourneyer and joustier.²³ After this event, Ulrich went on to another tourney at Brixen in Tirol (*FD* 339–41), which was followed by jousting. Lengthier and more detailed descriptions are given of tourneys held at later stages in his life at Klosterneuburg in the duchy of Austria (*FD* 986–1076) and Katzelsdorf in the duchy of Styria (*FD* 1566–1600). The most extended and detailed description of a tourney relates to an event held at Friesach in Carinthia, which is particularly significant because it was preceded by several days of jousting. According to Ulrich, the tourney took place on the occasion of a conference organized by Leopold VI, Duke of Austria (1198–1230) and Styria (1194–1230), with the aim of settling a political dispute between Bernhard II, Duke of Carinthia (1202–56), and Heinrich IV of Andechs, Margrave of Istria (d. 1228). These three rulers brought large armed retinues with them, and the event also attracted many of the other secular and ecclesiastical princes of the wider region: Albrecht III, Count of Tirol, Meinhard III, Count of Görz, Diepold, Margrave of Vohburg, Eberhard II, Archbishop of Salzburg, Berthold, Patriarch of Aquileia, Rüdiger, Bishop of Passau, Heinrich, Bishop of Brixen, and Ekbert, Bishop of Bamberg. It thus brought together most of the major political players in the entire south-east of the kingdom of Germany as well as parts of Lombardy, along with their retinues: Ulrich indicates that around 600 knights were present. Historians have been unable to confirm that this tourney ever took place, but, as argued by Gerald Krenn, the considerable prosopographical detail given by Ulrich suggests that his account is an elaboration of an actual event held at some point in the years 1220–1224 (*FD* 177–312).²⁴

A gathering of so many knights would have been seen as an opportunity for chivalric combat in different forms, since it would mean that their deeds would

²³ Görz is the modern city of Gorizia in the province of the same name in Italy.

²⁴ Krenn, "Historische Figuren und/oder Helden der Dichtung?," *Ich – Ulrich von Liechtenstein* (see note 15), 118–19. On the wider political context, see Günther Hödl, "Der Donau- und Alpen-Adria-Raum im Jahr 1246," *Ich – Ulrich von Liechtenstein* (see note 15), 25–48.

be witnessed by the largest possible number of their peers. When he and his brother Dietmar von Liechtenstein heard about the gathering at Friesach, Ulrich was immediately taken with the possibilities for jousting there:

Do ich des tages wart gevar,
 ich wart sin fro von herzen gar,
 ich kom sa zu dem bruoder min,
 der ouch kan wol ein ritter sin.
 ich sprach: "Dietmar von Liechtenstein,
 wir sül'n werden des eneîn,
 daz wir da brüeven ritterschaft,
 dar chumt von herren craft".

Er sprach: du hast geraten wol,
 ich volg dir gern als ich sol,
 wir suln uns bede des bewegen,
 mit rittern in ein foreis legen;
 und al die wile der tac da were,
 swer an uns ritterscheffe gere,
 daz er der werd von uns gewert,
 swie er wil und swie er gert. (FD 181–82)

[When I learned of this meeting
 my heart was gladdened.
 I went to my brother,
 who is also a knight,
 saying: "Dietmar von Liechtenstein,
 let us agree to go there
 and do deeds of knighthood,
 for a great number of lords will be there".

He said: "this is good advice
 and I will gladly go with you.
 We should take ourselves
 into the *foreis* with other knights;
 and as long as the conference is going on,
 whoever wishes to do deeds of knighthood
 will be granted a combat with us
 as he desires".]

What is interesting about this short exchange is the word *foreis*, which is obviously derived from OFr. *forest*. In this exchange Ulrich does not simply intend that he and his fellow knights should go to a wood, which he could have easily expressed by the usual German term (MHG *walt*); rather, the loan-word *foreis* seems to denote a specific type of contest which took place in a forest environ-

ment. Ulrich's formulation implies that it would involve him and his brother jousting against challengers, rather than being a general series of jousts.

The general character of this type of contest is confirmed by an account in the near contemporary chronicle of the abbey of Reinhardsbrunn, which relates how on the feast of St Walburga (May 1, 1226) the knight Waltmann von Seidingstadt, a vassal of Landgrave Ludwig of Thuringia, went to a *locus militiae* ("place of knighthood") which was known in the vernacular as *forest*, offering to joust three courses (*tres zlost*) against any challenger. Anyone who unhorsed him would be entitled to take away not only his equipment, but a damsel whom he had brought with him.²⁵ The forest venue and the derivation of the name of the event from French make it likely that this contest was intended as an imitation of a common topos of Arthurian literature, in which a knight set out through a forest or wilderness seeking adventure, such as rescuing an abducted lady. The presence of the damsel was presumably intended to strengthen this literary framework. One might assume that the jousting would take place at the proclaimed location, yet the description in the chronicle implies that Waltmann was challenged by many other knights before he set off, and effectively fought his way there until he arrived undefeated.²⁶ This suggests that the precise format of the event was still relatively novel and fluid.

At Friesach Ulrich and his brother did not carry out their plan of holding a *foreis*, but the brief episode does show that by the 1220s there seems to have been a new form of the joust with a framework deriving from literature. A disadvantage of the *foreis* may well have been the expected forest setting, since this venue was not conducive to attracting spectators, who were vital if the competing knights were to gain recognition and honour. In the event, the Liechtenstein brothers found more than enough jousting to occupy them at Friesach. While the princes were deliberating, many of the knights from their retinues began a series

25 "Chronica Reinhardsbrunnensis" (see note 1), 608: "In diebus illis erat quidam miles Waltmannus de Setenstete, ministerialis lantgravii Thuringie Ludewici, qui indixerat plenam miliciam, eo quid esset strenuus ipse miles in armis et de sua virtute et animositate confideret. Constituerat autem locum huius milicie, qui appellatur vulgariter forest, in Merseburg civitate post beate Walburgis festum, iactans se ad locum iam dictum adducere puellam decoram valde, que nisum super manum tenere deberet, ad plenitudinem tante milicie exercendam; et in qualibet dieta dedit tres zlost, ut, a quocumque victus iacuisset, victor arma tolleret et domicellam cum omni milicie sue apparatu sibi pariter usurparet.

26 "Chronica Reinhardsbrunnensis" (see note 1), 608: "Invictus tamen et illesus domicellam illam usque ad locum, in quo forest celebratus fuerat, perduxit, multa in via exercitatus milicia, quia plurimi ei ex diversis provinciis occurrerunt et ei domicellam et apparatus sue milicie auferre conabantur per milicie qui zlost vocatur. Invictus ergo pertransiit omnes et ad locum foreste gloriose pervenit."

of impromptu jousts, which continued for several days (*FD* 203–37). To describe these events Ulrich uses the term *tyostiren* but also *stechen* (“strike, break”) which highlights the action of breaking a lance on one’s opponent as proof of having made a good strike. The jousting at Friesach offered the knights the chance to practice this one distinct skill, without being distracted by the other factors present in a mock battle, but there were undoubtedly other reasons for its popularity.

After a day’s tourneying the majority of knights and their horses would have been exhausted and many of them possibly injured. An equally important difference, however, is what was at stake. Since the beginnings of tourneying it was traditional for captured or defeated knights to forfeit their equipment and horses. In the preliminary jousting this does not seem to have been the case. Jousts could be run as a long series of one-on-one combats, in which the entire knightly company could closely observe the prowess of pairs of opponents without distractions; since the combats were fought in a more restricted space than a tourney, it was also possible for other knights as well as non-combatant spectators to watch from a close distance.

According to his own testimony, Ulrich von Liechtenstein also exploited the theatrical possibilities offered by the joust. After the first day of jousting at Friesach he decided that he would next appear in disguise, dressed in green and carrying a green lance, with his servants similarly attired. Since he was no longer wearing his own coat of arms, Ulrich could not be identified; his intention was to heighten the curiosity and interest of the spectators in the identity of this mysterious unknown knight (*FD* 215–29). He certainly claims that he came to the attention of Heinrich, Margrave of Istria, but in order to preserve the mystery he then resorted to his own shield and crest before the identity of the Green Knight could be found out (*FD* 230–31). The figure of a knight appearing in a single colour is a common trope in Arthurian literature, where such plain arms are often adopted by a well-known knight as a way of disguising his identity.²⁷ This was the first instance of Ulrich adopting a persona deriving from literature, and it seems to mark a milestone in the evolution of the joust.

The jousting that took place at Friesach had an “unofficial” character. It involved many of the knights who belonged to the retinues of the princes who were conferring, without the princes themselves being involved. Yet when the dukes of Austria and Carinthia had finished their political deliberations, they announced

²⁷ For a list of Black Knights, Green Knights, Red Knights etc. in Old French literature, see Gerard J. Brault, *Early Blazon: Heraldic Terminology in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries with Special Reference to Arthurian Heraldry*, 2nd ed. (1972; Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1997), 29–35.

their desire to hold a proper tourney; Ulrich's descriptions imply that they found the jousting tiresome. So immediately the jousts were broken off and preparations were started for a larger event which would involve all of the princely retinues. First, the participants were divided up by retinue (a process described as *teilen*) to produce two sides of roughly equal strength. The retinues varied in size: the duke of Austria had 50 knights, the duke of Carinthia 55, and the count of Tirol 40, while most of the other princes and the free lords had smaller numbers, with the smallest retinue (that of Diepold of Vohburg) numbering only twelve. Thus each of the two sides was made up of a number of companies (MHG *scharen*), each with its own commander (MHG *rotmaister*); each company could maneuver independently of the others (FD 246–54). After being summoned by heralds (MHG *grogiraere*, “cryers”), the companies assembled in the fields outside Friesach, presenting a dazzling sight. At this point in history, knights fought in the tourney with the same weapons and armour that were employed in real warfare, but some of their decorative equipment was often more elaborate than that worn in battle. Heraldic devices were depicted on shields, surcoats and the trappings of the horses, sometimes making use of costly furs such as sable or ermine, while lances were painted in bright colours. The crest (MHG *zimîr*), that is the decoration on top of the helmet, was often in the shape of a beast, made of hardened leather, or in the form of wings or plumes made from eagle or peacock feathers (FD 244, 258–59).

The tourney commenced with a mass charge of the two sides, which clashed with such force (MHG *puneiz*) that numerous lances were shattered on impact, while many horses and riders were immediately knocked to the ground. Companies which could manage to keep together had an advantage, and commanders were keen to prevent them from breaking up, or for them to reform if this was unavoidable. This meant that knights had to be dissuaded from seeking single combats as the formations advanced. Thus Ulrich has one of the commanders at Friesach encourage his men:

Wir suln den turnei mit den spern
hie heben schon, sit si sin gern,
habt iuch zesamen, daz ist nu guot!
si sint vil ritterlich gemuot,
die uns da wellent hie bestan,
ir sut für war daz uf mir han,
von rehter warheit ich ez weiz:
hie wirt ein ritterlich puneiz.

Nu drucket iuch zesamen gar!
seht ir, wie ritterlich diu schar
gegen uns dort stapfet mit den spern?

si wellent uns tyostirens wern,
 des hab ir manlich herze danc.
 nu machet den puneiz niht lanc
 und seht, daz wir si vast an komen,
 daz mag in geschaden und uns gefromen! (*FD* 262–63)

[Take your lances in your hands,
 for we should start the tourney with lances,
 since that is what they want;
 now keep together, that is the right way!
 Those who want to defeat us
 are of good, knightly spirits,
 so you can believe me that I tell you:
 there will be a fine charge here.

Now form up tight together!
 Do you see how that company is coming
 towards us with their lances?
 They want to prevent us from jousting,
 so be thankful for that.
 Let us not charge for too long,
 but get stuck into them.
 That will harm them and help us!]

Once combat had started, knights could ride back to a safe area where they could recover or replace their lances: we are told that Wolfger von Gars broke twenty lances on the single day of the tourney, which would only have been possible if he had a support team of squires ready to replace his broken weapons. Identified to participants and spectators by their bright heraldic devices, knights had the chance to win honour and renown, but the tourney also offered opportunities for financial gain. Instead of killing opponents as they would do in war, knights attempted to capture opponents for ransom, which was achieved by two main methods. The most common technique, especially in close combat, was to belabor an opponent with sword blows until he yielded and agreed to leave the field as a captive, giving surety that he had surrendered to his captor. Sometimes knights would end up grappling with one another in an attempt to force a surrender; a vivid example of this can be seen in the illustration of Heinrich I, Duke of Anhalt, in the *Codex Manesse*, which shows three knights holding unhelmed opponents with their left arms while striking them with their swords

held in their right.²⁸ Knights whose helms were knocked off or whose shields were broken were especially vulnerable, and would often surrender rather than risk serious injury. Often knights were in danger of being isolated and unable to reform in their companies, as Ulrich describes:

Si drungen her, si drungen hin,
 uf umbekeren stuont ir sin,
 da manger helm vil ab brach;
 den andern den man zoumen sach,
 um den von rittern was gedranc.
 manic swert uf helm erclanc,
 vil schilde man da bresten sach,
 von grozen stoezen das geschach. (*FD* 267)

[They pressed this way, they pressed that way,
 and wanted to turn about
 because many had lost their helms;
 others held on to the reins
 of those being attacked by the knights.
 Many a sword rang out on helms
 and many shields were broken apart
 from the mighty blows.]

An alternative technique to capture an opponent was to seize the reins or bridle of his horse and physically pull the animal from the field. Ulrich tells how Meinhard of Görz managed to grasp the reins of Leopold of Austria's horse, and was on the point of leading him away when Diepold of Vohburg and some of Leopold's men rode up and fought Meinhard off (*FD* 283–84). The point of taking captives was that it was customary for captured tourneyers to pay ransoms to their captors, or to forfeit their horses and equipment. Ulrich tells us that 150 knights lost their horses to opponents, while the captives had to borrow money from the Jews of Friesach in order to pay their ransoms (*FD* 306, 311).

The two main tournament forms displayed at Friesach show certain tensions. In the tourney the desire for individual glory and honour often ran counter to the demands of discipline, which required that formations kept their ranks together. The meeting at Friesach offered the opportunity for knights to showcase their jousting skills, but these contests were simply a preliminary to the main event, and so any wish to joust in this manner generally had to rely on a tourney being organized in order to guarantee participants in sufficient numbers and

²⁸ Ms. Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Pal.germ. 848, fol. 17r, available at <https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg848> (last accessed on Feb. 4, 2019).

quality. Some time after Friesach, Ulrich took part in another tourney, this time at Brixen in Tirol and involving a hundred knights, yet it evidently failed to fulfil the desire for jousting. After it ended, Ulrich agreed to joust with a Tirolean knight called Ulschalk von Bozen, a contest in which he claimed that he lost a finger (FD 340–43), but this was clearly separate from the main event.²⁹ His descriptions of jousting before the tourney at Friesach and after the journey at Brixen thus both suggest that the tourney was insufficiently satisfying for those knights who wished primarily to practice their jousting skills.

V. The “Venus Journey”

Ulrich’s solution to the contradictions outlined above seems to have been to devise a new tournament form which was restricted to the element of jousting, and which placed him on centre stage by maximizing the numbers of opponents as well as the spectators who could observe his deeds. While scholarship has traditionally referred to the first example of this new form as the *Venusfahrt* (Venus Journey), which is traditionally dated to 1227, this is not a term that occurs in the work, and indeed the absence of a distinctive term to describe it is probably an indication of its novelty. The manuscript gives the section heading *Aventiure wie der Ulrich in küneginne wise fuor durch diu lant mit ritterschefte* (“Adventure of how Ulrich travelled through the lands in chivalry in the guise of a queen”). The queen in question was Venus, who provided the theme for an extended series of jousts. Ulrich proposed to travel in the character and costume of the goddess of love, starting at Mestre on the northern Adriatic coast and travelling as far as the Bohemian frontier, which he expected to reach twenty-eight days later. In order to attract opponents, he issued a public challenge to all the knights of Lombardy, Friuli, Carinthia, Styria, Austria and Bohemia to come and joust with him at any of the advertised stops on his journey. The journey was to conclude a week after the final stop with a tourney, which shows that despite the innovative character of Ulrich’s tour a general participatory event was expected.

In addition to his proposed route, Ulrich also announced special conditions for each joust. Any knight who broke a lance against Venus was to be rewarded

²⁹ It is regularly stated by scholars that Ulrich claimed to have lost a finger at a tourney at Brixen. In fact, the text makes it clear that Ulschalk asked to joust only *do sich der turnei gar zerlie* (“when the tourney had ended”). It then gives the description: *ein schoen tyost al da geschach. / der hochgelobt Ulschalc mir stach / einen vinger uz der hant* (“a fine joust took place there. / the worthy Ulschalk struck a finger off my hand”). FD 342, 1 and 343, 3–5.

with a golden ring, which he was to give to the woman he loved most of all. If Venus was to unhorse a knight, he was to bow to all four directions of the world in honour of a woman; if Venus herself were to be unhorsed, then the knight in question was to have all the horses she had with her. These unequal conditions suggest that by this time, Ulrich was an experienced and confident joustier and did not expect to be unhorsed. At the same time, the conditions were designed to attract opponents, since even if they were defeated by Venus, they had little to lose (*FD* pp. 105–06). What was quite new was that Ulrich introduced elements of allegory and theatre to provide a framework for the event. The detailed exposition of the conditions of the jousts is one of the earliest known examples of what became known in French as *chapitres*, which came to be an essential feature of jousting competitions in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.³⁰ Another novel feature was the adoption of an allegorical costume. In order to appear in the character of Venus, Ulrich wore a silvery white gown, and a headdress with long braids of hair entwined with pearls; these matched the white colour of his shield and horse trappings. He was accompanied by a retinue consisting of his marshal, cook, squires, musicians and servants, all clad in white livery and carrying a large supply of lances painted in gleaming white. Venus's itinerary was proclaimed well in advance, and attracted many knights who were keen to display their skills and measure themselves against such a noted joustier (*FD* 473–79, 482–86).

A huge amount of scholarly effort has gone into analysing the significance of Ulrich's adoption of female costume, with the number of dedicated studies on cross-dressing or transvestism far outweighing those on his tournament activities.³¹ However, apart from the question of the appearance and form of Venus's

30 For examples of *chapitres* from France and England, see especially Ralph D. Moffat, "The Medieval Tournament: Chivalry, Heraldry and Reality. An Edition and Analysis of Three Fifteenth-Century Tournament Manuscripts," Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds, 2010 [accessible at: http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/1430/1/Ralph_Moffat_PhD_2010.pdf (last accessed on Feb. 4, 2019)].

31 Ingrid Bennewitz, "Eine Dame namens Ulrich, oder: Über den pragmatischen Nutzen von Frauenkleidern für die literarischen Helden des Mittelalters," *Ich – Ulrich von Liechtenstein* (see note 15), 349–70; Ruth Weichselbaumer, "er wart gemerket unde erkant / durch seine unvro-weliche site. Männliches Cross-Dressing in der mittelhochdeutschen Literatur," *Manlichiu wîp, wîplich man: Zur Konstruktion der Kategorien 'Körper' und 'Geschlecht' in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters* (Internationales Kolloquium der Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft und der Gerhard-Mercator-Universität Duisburg, Xanten 1997), ed. Ingrid Bennewitz and Helmut Tervoorren. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, 9 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1999), 326–41; Andrea Moshövel, "Ulrich von Liechtenstein – ein Transvestit? Überlegungen zur Geschlechterkonstruktion im *Frauendienst* Ulrichs von Liechtenstein," *Manlichiu wîp, wîplich man*, 342–69;

costume,³² I think that this apparently complex issue can be reduced to a single pragmatic consideration. Ulrich was not actually pretending to be a woman. In thirteenth-century Western society no woman could have acquired the training in riding and fighting necessary to joust, and even if we imagine for a moment that some enterprising woman could have somehow managed to acquire the requisite skills, no knight would ever have agreed to fight anyone who was recognisably female, since this would have been an unequal contest and thus beneath all conventions of courtliness.³³ The adoption of the costume of Venus allowed Ulrich to work a strong element of comedy into his narrative, but it was less of a disguise than an outward indication of the reason why Ulrich was undertaking his journey, namely his love for his lady. The real identity of Venus was, of course, an open secret, but everyone involved was happy to play along with the fiction.

The entire *Venusfahrt* (if we can accept this name), was a series of jousts played out as a kind of game within an essentially amicable context. The *Frauentdienst* records over sixty named opponents who jousts with Ulrich in his guise of Venus, most of whom can be identified as historical individuals.³⁴ All of the jousts attracted spectators as well as challengers, but there is no evidence that they were held at dedicated venues. Rather, the jousts took place at a variety of locations which offered flat and even ground, guaranteeing visibility for spectators: at Treviso, a bridge (FD 515) and later the banks of the River Piave (FD 545); at Villach, the market place (FD 612). In most cases, however, the venue was simply a field outside the town, as at Gemona, Friesach, and Leoben (FD

Andrea Sieber, "Paradoxe Geschlechterkonstruktionen bei Ulrich von Liechtenstein," in *Ulrich von Liechtenstein: Leben – Zeit – Werk – Forschung* (see note 15), 261–304.

32 Annemarie Bönsch, "Das Venus-Gewand Ulrichs von Liechtenstein. Eine kostümkundliche Dokumentation," *Ulrich von Liechtenstein: Leben – Zeit – Werk – Forschung* (see note 15), 411–10.

33 Vern L. Bullough, "On Being a Male in the Middle Ages," *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare A. Lees. Medieval Cultures, 7 (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 31–45; Albrecht Classen, "Moriz, Tristan, and Ulrich as Master Disguise Artists: Deconstruction and Reenactment of Courtliness in *Moriz von Craûn*, *Tristan als Mönch*, and Ulrich von Liechtenstein's *Frauentdienst*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 103 (2004): 475–504.

34 Ulrich Müller and Franz Viktor Spechtler, "Ulrich von Liechtenstein", *German Literature of the High Middle Ages*, ed. Will Hasty. The Camden House History of German Literature, 3 (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006), 234–41, state that in the role of Venus, Ulrich "fights duels with many noble knights" (p. 237). The word *duel* would imply either a judicial combat or a serious fight which would be expected to end with death or serious injury. However, the jousts described are restricted to an agreed number of courses fought with lances only, rather than continuing with swords, as would be expected in a duel. The friendly and limited character of the jousts can also be seen in the generally positive descriptions given of Ulrich's challengers.

581, 647, 666).³⁵ One wonders whether Ulrich could correctly remember and record the exact details of so many jousts, but there is no reason to doubt that contests with many or most of these individuals took place, and indeed, they in turn could only gain honour from being memorialised in Ulrich's book. The names of the opponents recorded suggest that Ulrich did not joust with *any* knight, but with princes, *ministeriales* and free lords who had knightly retinues of their own. Ulrich thus gained honour by jousting against respected opponents of a similar or higher status, such as Count Meinhard of Görz (FD 553). He was also honoured through other courtesies shown him by personages of a higher rank. Thus he records formulaic, courtly greetings made to Venus: *got willechomen, kuneginne Venus* ("may God greet you, Queen Venus") or variations thereon (FD 531,6; 565,3, 651,3–4). In the case of Bernhard, Duke of Carinthia, who was probably the highest-status individual he encountered, he details a much more elaborate greeting:

Der fürste und die gesellen sin
mich hiezen willechomen sin,
ir gruoß was gegen mir alsus:
"buge waz primi, gralva Venus!"
Des neig ich zuhteclichen da.
si hiezen mich des vragē sa,
ob ich tyostiren wolde da,
ich sprach uz hohen muote: "ja!" (FD 592)

[The prince and his companions
bade me welcome, and
their greeting to me was thus:
"God greet you, Queen Venus!"
to this I bowed my head courteously.
Then they asked me
if I wanted to joust there;
Full of high spirits, I replied "yes"!]

Here Ulrich meticulously records the duke's greeting given in the Slavic language which was still used – not least for ceremonial purposes – in the duchy of Car-

³⁵ DeVries, in his introduction to Thomas's abridged translation (see note 16), claims that the joust "generally took part [sic] on a tournament field, although this field would of necessity be narrowed until there was but a double lane divided by a barrier" (p. viii). In fact the examples cited above show that there were no dedicated venues for jousting, which was held on any available level ground; there is no evidence of a tilt (barrier) being used in jousting anywhere in *Frauendienst*.

inthia.³⁶ Since the duke was the ruler of a neighbouring principality, this courtesy represented a signal honour.

In addition to the challengers, the jousts attracted many other knights who either wanted to spectate, or to take part in jousting with other contenders. Thus after Ulrich had broken seven lances against the followers of Meinhard of Görz, the count and his knights started a more general jousting contest which lasted the entire day. Moreover, many of the knights who turned up then accompanied him on to subsequent stages of the journey, progressively increasing the number of spectators; thus eighty knights rode with him into Vienna (*FD* 798). Others wished to attain a closer connection. Thus Wolfger von Gars asked to be appointed to the office of chamberlain, which Ulrich conceded after they had jousted (*FD* 751–68). Otto von Lengenbach was accorded the title of marshal without having jousted, possibly because of his prestigious rank as *tuomvogt*, that is, advocate of the cathedral church of Regensburg, (*FD* 808–15). From the point that it left Mestre, Venus's company had already included officials with these designations, who were presumably responsible for billeting (chamberlain) and horses (marshal). So the appointments of Wolfger von Gars and Otto von Lengenbach were purely honorific, and analogous to the titles of aulic officials which common in the imperial and princely courts in this time in Germany.³⁷ Ulrich thus seems to have been trying to give Venus a greater importance by creating a travelling court for his character.

Not all of the challenges were to Ulrich's liking. When he reached Feldkirchen, he broke lances on ten different knights who came to challenge him there, but the eleventh, one Zachäus von Himmelsberg, turned up in a remarkable costume. Over his coat of mail Zachäus wore a black monk's habit. On his helm instead of a crest, he had a wig in the form of a monastic tonsure (*FD* 617). Ulrich refused the challenge, claiming that it was not appropriate for monks to fight.

36 Alan V. Murray, "Bog vas sprejmi, kraljeva Venus! Ulrik Liechtensteinski in turnirsko bojevanje na Štajerskem, Koroškem in v Avstriji," *Vitez, Dama in Zmaj: Dediščina srednjeveških bojevnikov na Slovenskem*, ed. Tomaž Lazar and Tomaž Nabergoj, 2 vols (Ljubljana: Narodni muzej Slovenije, 2011), 1: 135–45. The duke's greeting as recorded in the *Frauendienst* manuscript corresponds to the words *Bog vas sprejmi, kraljeva Venus* in modern Slovene.

37 By the beginning of the thirteenth century most of the princely courts in Germany included four aulic officers: marshal (Lat. *marescalcus*), chamberlain (*camerarius*), steward (*dapifer*) and butler (*pincerna*), to which some courts added the office of master of the kitchen (*magister coquinae*). See Alan V. Murray, "Der König und der Küchenmeister. Überlegungen zur Rolle Rumolts im *Nibelungenlied*", *Nibelungenlied und Klage: Ursprung – Funktion – Bedeutung. Symposium Kloster Andechs 1995 mit Nachträgen bis 1998*, ed. Dietz-Rüdiger Moser and Marianne Sammer. Beibände zur Zeitschrift "Literatur in Bayern", 2 (Munich: Literatur in Bayern, 1998), 395–410, as well as the contribution of Maria Reed in this volume.

Do ich in sach sus gegen mir chomen,
 der helm min wart abe genomen;
 ich hiez im sagen an der stat,
 sit er an im het munches wat
 und münch ouch wold für ritter sin,
 so wolde ouch da künegin
 mit im niht ritterschefte pflegen,
 des het si sich durch zuht bewegen. (FD 619)

[When I saw him approaching me thus,
 My helm was being removed.
 I had him told there and then,
 since he was wearing monk's clothing
 and this monk wanted to be a knight,
 that the queen would not
 do chivalry with him;
 courtly behaviour prevented her from doing this.]

The point of Ulrich's costume was to ensure that he was always the centre of attention, and he was reluctant to allow others to steal his thunder. By pretending to take the disguise of Zachäus at face value, he was able to avoid jousting with another costumed knight who might have attracted attention away from him. The encounters at St. Veit may have been intended to form a high point of the journey. Duke Bernhard of Carinthia had established this town as his capital, and Ulrich evidently expected a sufficient number of opponents for two complete days of jousting.³⁸ On the first day Zachäus von Himmelsberg appeared again, but once more Ulrich refused combat. However, on the second day several of the spectating knights pleaded with Ulrich to joust with the monk, asking him to ignore the costume Zachäus had put on. Continuing to refuse this challenger would mean losing esteem in the eyes of the knights who were accompanying him, so he finally agreed to joust. Luckily the monk's lance was off target, while Ulrich's aim was true, and he knocked Zachäus from the saddle. From Ulrich's point of view, this was the only honourable resolution to his dilemma (FD 630–31, 638–41). Contrast this episode with a similar encounter which occurred at Kindberg, where Ulrich fought against the knight Otto von Buchau. Unlike Zachäus, Otto sent his compliments to Ulrich in advance by a messenger who claimed to represent a Slavic woman (MHG *windisch wîp*). Ulrich of course would know that he was not being challenged by a real woman, but he was able to have some fun by at first agreeing to joust, but insisting on fighting with-

38 Hödl, "Der Donau- und Alpen-Adria-Raum im Jahr 1246," *Ich – Ulrich von Liechtenstein* (see note 15), 44–45.

out armour in order to even the contest, so that eventually the messenger was obliged to reveal the identity of his master as a male knight. Honor was now satisfied and Otto turned up wearing the dress of a Slavic woman, with braids hanging down to his saddle, and the joust was fought to the satisfaction of both parties (*FD* 685–97).

By choosing to undertake a series of jousts at points along a journey lasting several weeks, rather than organising a jousting competition at a fixed location, Ulrich maximized the renown that he was likely to gain. At the Bohemian frontier, where the journey ended, some hundred knights were present. Ulrich jousted with many of them, but then ceased in order to allow many of the others to engage in a general jousting competition. He had previously announced that he wished to hold a tourney a week after the end of his journey, which duly took place at Klosterneuburg (*FD* 833–34, 986–1123). In the meantime he had become downcast because his lady informed him by messenger of her rejection of love, but he was encouraged to tourney by his companions. In turn, he duly recorded the valorous deeds of his brother Dietmar, Wolfger von Gars and Otto von Lengenbach, as well as others with whom he had previously jousted. This might suggest that Ulrich believed that his innovative journey needed to conclude with a more established and traditional tournament form.

VI. An Arthurian Journey: The Round Table

Around 1240 Ulrich set off on another jousting tour through Styria and Austria, which had some resemblances to his previous journey, but also showed several innovations. This last tournament form employed by Ulrich is described in the final *aventure* of the poem, although it is not straightforward to interpret. A bifolium is missing at this point, meaning that there is no distinct chapter heading for the activity, or a clear explanation for its origin.³⁹ It is conventionally referred

39 Jürgen Wolf, “Überlieferung, Handschriften. Ulrich von Liechtenstein im Buch,” in *Ulrich von Liechtenstein: Leben – Zeit – Werk – Forschung* (see note 15), 487–514, points out (p. 489) that the missing bifolium before folio 100 could potentially have contained eight columns amounting to about 280 lines of poetry. Nevertheless, in his edition (*FD* p. 294) Spechtler assumes that the greater part of this lacuna contained song text(s), and that only three lines are missing from the beginning of the *Artusfahrt* (*FD* 1400, 1–3). Spechtler’s interpretation can be questioned. The first two lines on folio 100 are: *die warn lieht, vor rost behuot, dar über zwen hurtenir von horn* (“they were bright and free from rust, with two hurtenir of horn over them”). The description continues: *man strichte mir umb da ouch zwen sporn, / der varbe lieht von golde schein, / sus waren gewapent die bein* (“Two spurs were also put on me, shining with a bright golden colour; thus my legs were armoured”). This is clearly an arming scene, which continues over the next

to in modern German as the *Artusfahrt* (Arthurian Journey) a term constructed on the model of the *Venusfahrt*, although neither term actually occurs in the manuscript. It is entirely possible that this entire section should be considered as part of the previous *aventure*, which otherwise would be far shorter than any of the other divisions of work; this is entitled *Aventure wie der Ulrich im ein ander frowen nam* (Adventure of how Ulrich took another lady). In that case, it would be appropriate for Ulrich to impress his new lady by devising a new form of jousting contest, at least as he remembered it when he came to write up his memories.

The distance to be travelled was shorter than in the Venus Journey: from Ulrich's castle at Liechtenstein in Styria to Vienna, the capital of the duchy of Austria. It has been suggested convincingly that as well as affording opportunities to joust, the journey was intended to allow Ulrich to make a public reconciliation with his lord Frederick, Duke of Austria and Styria (1230–46), son of Leopold VI, after disputes between the two during the intervention in Austria of Emperor Frederick II.⁴⁰ The opening strophes describe his equipment: his surcoat (MHG *wapenroc*, literally “coat of arms”), shield, crest, banner and horse coverings were all in red, picked out with decoration in gold and green (FD 1400–07). Ulrich was thus not jousting in his personal coat of arms, but it is only some way in to the narrative when he is addressed directly by one of his challengers, Leutfried von Eppenstein, that it becomes evident that Ulrich was undertaking this journey in the character of *Artus*, that is King Arthur (FD 1416). By Ulrich's time the sto-

three strophes. The normal process of arming involved the knight standing upright in doublet and hose, while his squires put on the various pieces of armour, starting with the legs and feet and working upwards. Lines 4–5 must thus have continued a description of armour on the lower body which had begun in the first three lines of the strophe. The pieces described as free from rust were most likely mail leggings, whose description probably ended with the word *guot* in line 3, to rhyme with *behuot* in line 4. The rare word *hurtenir* is more problematic; it would seem to derive from MHG *hurt* < OFr. *heurt* (“strike, collision”) and presumably refers to additional protective pieces. Anything made completely of horn would be too inflexible to serve in combat, so the two *hurtenir* were probably a pair of additional protective layers consisting of pieces of horn sewn onto textile, which were worn over the mail leggings. As the missing initial three lines of the strophe can be assumed to have begun the description of the armour for legs and feet, this would leave no space before it for any explanation of this journey or Ulrich's adoption of the character of Arthur, which otherwise would not be mentioned until strophe 1416. One might reasonably expect a longer introduction to this episode which would take up the narrative again after a bloc of at least six song texts, and I think therefore that the introduction of the *Artusfahrt* must have originally taken up more of the missing text than Spechtler assumes. For the process of arming of a knight, see Ralph Moffat, “The Manner of Arming Knights for the Tourney: A Re-interpretation of an Important Early 14th-Century Arming Treatise,” *Arms and Armour* 7 (2010), 5–29.

40 Dopsch, “Zwischen Dichtung und Politik,” (see note 20), pp. 93–94.

ries of Arthur and his knights had been made popular in German-speaking countries through adaptations of French romances as well as new works by Hartmann von Aue, Ulrich von Zatzikhoven, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Wirnt von Grafenberg and Heinrich von dem Türlin. At one point the knight Konrad von Saurau is likened to Feirefiz, the half-brother of the eponymous hero of *Parzival*, as well as to Arofel, the heathen king of Persia in *Willehalm*, showing that Ulrich was conversant with Wolfram's two major narrative works (*FD* 1410,5).⁴¹ The journey thus has a stronger literary framework than Ulrich's previous exploits in the character of Venus.

The influence of Arthurian literature can be clearly seen in the character and organisation of this journey, and it was employed in a manner that strengthened bonds between participants. Jousting was offered by Ulrich at stopping points along his routes, but a refinement on his previous journey was that some of his opponents were given a special distinction: anyone who broke three lances against him was to be admitted to a company which is henceforth described as a *tavelrunde* (Round Table); its members were each assigned a name of a well-known character from Arthurian literature (*FD* 1429, 3; 1429, 8; 1445, 6; 1458, 6; 1514, 1; 1518, 2; 1564, 5). Another new feature is that considerable attention is paid to the coats of arms of the jousters, many of which are described in detail. The planned culmination of the journey occurred at Katzelsdorf in north-eastern Styria, where Ulrich and his companions set up a *tavelrunde gezelt* (camp of the Round Table) consisting of eight pavilions and four tents, and in front of it a wide ring marked out by a blue and yellow ribbon supported by two hundred spears. This ring had two openings, which were to be defended against all comers by Ulrich as Arthur along with his company, each one having adopted, or been given, a name derived from Arthurian romance: his brother Dietmar von Liechtenstein (Gawan); Erchenger von Landsee (Iwein); Heinrich von Spiegelberg (Lanzelet); Nikolaus von Lebenberg (Tristan); Alber von Arnstein (Segramors); a lord of Lienz, possibly Heinrich (Parzival), a lord of Lindeniz (Ither) and an unidentified Erec. Ulrich's account sums up the jousting of the first day:

Von Landesere her Ywan,
her Lanzilet und her Gawan
die taten ez des abendes so,
da von ir lop muost stigen ho;
si werten den rinc, daz ist war,
den abent al den rittern gar,

⁴¹ See also John W. Thomas, "Parzival as a Source for *Frauendienst*," *Modern Language Notes* 87 (1972): 419–32.

da wart manic schoene tyost geriten
sus und so nach ritters siten. (FD 1529)

[Sir Iwein von Landsee,
Sir Lanzelet and Sir Gawan,
their deeds that evening were such that
they should gain great praise;
in truth, they defended the ring
the evening long against all the knights;
many a fine joust was ridden there
according to knightly custom.]

The idea of defending a fixed position (the demarcated ring) was a new element in jousting, in addition to the Arthurian identities of the protagonists. Despite the idea of equality of membership implied in the Arthurian Round Table, most challengers wished to joust with King Arthur alias Ulrich, who was identified as the highest-status member; one of these was a lord named Kadolt Weise, who explicitly requested to fight three courses against Arthur, a wish that Ulrich granted. However, the number of challengers wishing to joust with Arthur resulted in Ulrich's companions asking him to desist so that they too could be allowed the opportunity to joust. He agreed, and the jousting continued for five days (FD 1513–66).

The first recorded Round Table took place – surprisingly – in Cyprus in 1223, although it is unlikely that the form originated in this peripheral territory; rather, it must have been taken from France by the crusaders and settlers who established a kingdom on this former Byzantine island in the wake of the Third Crusade (1189–1192). A prohibition on such events from England in 1232 indicates that by that time the Round Table was well known in the areas where tournaments originated, so it seems that Ulrich was taking over an idea which was relatively new.⁴² Nevertheless, we know almost nothing about the format of these events. It was only from the second half of the thirteenth century that more detailed descriptions of Round Tables survive, mostly from England and France.⁴³ The detail given about a similar event in *Frauendienst* is thus valuable testimony on the origins of this tournament form. It is unclear how Ulrich intended his contest of the Round Table to conclude, since on the evening of the fifth day a messenger arrived with instructions from Duke Frederick, saying:

42 Juliet Barker and Maurice Keen, "The Medieval English Kings and the Tournament," *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter* (see note 2), 212–28; here 212–13.

43 Brault, *Early Blazon* (see note 25), 37–54; Barber and Barker, *Tournaments* (see note 21), 30–35.

“werder chünic rich,
iu hat der fürste Friderich
bi mir enboten also her,
daz er vil schone wil driu sper
gein iu verstechen hie entzwei,
daz sol geschehen vor dem turney.

Er giht, ez si hie also vil
getyostiret, daz er iuch des wil
biten, daz irz durch in lat,
wan er vil groze unmuoze hat;
ir sült den turney teilen lan,
da mit daz tyostiren understan” (*FD* 1567–68).

[“O worthy, mighty king,
Frederick the prince has sent me
to you with the message
that he wishes to
break three lances with you;
this is to be before the tourney.

For he says that there has been
much jousting here,
and he asks you to end it
as he has little time.
You should have the sides divided for the tourney,
and leave off the jousting.”]

As duke of Austria and Styria, Frederick was Ulrich’s lord, and so the jousters had no choice but to fall in with his demand. However, the language used by his messenger is conciliatory, in that he addresses Ulrich in his literary role, and the duke’s offer to joust three courses with him – a marked honour given their actual difference in rank – seems to have been intended as a gesture to compensate Ulrich for having to abandon the Round Table. The tourney was duly organized, with Ulrich’s own company being reinforced by the members of the Round Table, but after only a few hours fighting in the morning, a messenger again arrived from the duke, ordering an end to it, and as the news was conveyed through the tourney the knights, almost all of whom were ducal vassals, removed their helms as a sign that they were ceasing to fight (*FD* 1592–99).

The reasons for the duke’s seemingly mercurial behaviour are unclear, but may have been connected with political circumstances. If we accept Dopsch’s theory that Ulrich had incurred the duke’s displeasure, Frederick may have been willing to effect a reconciliation, yet unwilling to allow Ulrich to gain too

much fame by featuring as the central figure in the Round Table. However, this would not explain the cancellation of the tourney, where Ulrich would have had far less prominence. Ulrich himself relates that he hoped to go on to a tournament at Krumau⁴⁴ in Moravia, which had been announced by Kadolt Weise when Ulrich's Round Table company had come to Wiener Neustadt. However, he was summoned to see the duke, who forbade him to attend on the grounds that the king of Bohemia, in whose territory Krumau lay, was hostile to Austria. Again, Ulrich had no choice but to obey, and the tourney took place without him (FD 1600–09). This was indeed a strange ending to Ulrich's Round Table, and the recording of his disappointment at several unsatisfactory outcomes could be taken as an additional indication that his account of it is probably a reasonably accurate recollection rather than an idealized fiction.

VII. Conclusions

The evidence of Ulrich von Liechtenstein's *Frauendienst* shows that the first half of the thirteenth century was a key period for the diversification of the tournament in the German-speaking countries. It witnessed the beginnings of a shift from the tourney, originating as an exercise in which knights could train for war, towards discrete forms of the joust, which took on the character of a sporting contest and entertainment. We can observe a recurrent tension between tourney and joust. In cases where Ulrich himself was not involved in the organization of such events, jousting took place only in connection with tourneys, either preceding the main event (as at Friesach), or following it (as at Brixen); the poorly documented *foreis* events seem not to have achieved widespread popularity. By contrast, Ulrich's two jousting journeys in the guise of Venus and Arthur can be best understood as successive attempts to elevate the joust into an independent tournament form by providing it with an allegorical or literary framework, with varying degrees of success. Scholarly attention has tended to be preoccupied with Ulrich's spectacular appearance and its reception as described in the *Venusfahrt*, but it is difficult to categorize this event along with any of the other known tournament forms, possibly because the extended chivalric journey seems not to have been emulated; in general, it would prove much more practical to bring all those desirous of jousting together to a central location, rather than to hold a series of contests at different places over several weeks.

44 Now Moravský Krumov in the Czech Republic.

Ulrich's desire to imitate a literary model in the *Artusfahrt*, which was shorter in duration and culminated in a spectacular series of jousting contests, suggests that he was a key innovator in the development of a new form of tournament which came to be known as the Round Table and highlighted the element of the challenge. Finally, it is striking that on two well described occasions – at Friesach and Katzelsdorf – jousting was stopped on the order of princes, who demanded instead that the participants should fight a tourney. Jousting was a form that highlighted the valour and prowess of individual knights, while the tourney underscored the might of secular rulers which was reflected in the strength of their knightly retinues. This tension may well explain why it was not until the fourteenth century that the joust in its various new forms became established as a well regarded tournament form patronized by kings and princes.

Albrecht Classen

Drinking, Partying, and Drunkenness in Late Medieval German Verse Narratives and Jest Narratives

Social Behavior at Court and in the City: Clash of the Literary Projection and the Situation on the Ground in the Late Middle Ages

From earliest times until today, people have always enjoyed the consumption of alcohol during public or private celebrations, which has allowed them temporarily to escape the doldrums of everyday life, stress, frustration, fear, and boredom, although the sobering process brings everything back and actually makes things worse than they were before. Even though the poets of courtly literature do not talk that much about alcohol, there are countless references to drinking wine, the standard alcoholic beverage mostly reserved for members of the aristocracy and clergy throughout the pre-modern age. Already in the Old Testament, however, we can read a number of times about the consumption of wine, even to excess, as in the case of Noah (Genesis 9:21; see also Proverbs 20:1), and the New Testament contains several specific warnings about drunkenness (1 Peter 4:3; Ephesians 5:18; Romans 13:13). Concomitantly, however, drinking wine could also serve to bond the faithful together, such as in the Eucharist (Gal. 3:28).

This paper, by contrast, focuses on the aspect of drinking, drunkenness, loss of self-control, and the evaluation of alcohol at large by late medieval German poets and didactic writers, which sheds rather negative light on the traditionally idealized courtly and also urban world as reflected in its literary manifestation. By examining the critical discourse on alcoholism, this study intends to bring out the dark side of gaming, entertainment, feasting, and fellowship both at court and in the city. Even under the best circumstances, at court or in festive meeting places, alcohol appears and is consumed in large quantities. After a cursory re-

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view of some representative romances from the high Middle Ages, where the issue of drunkenness barely ever emerges, if at all, this study will uncover an entire genre of poems, verse narratives, and plays in which the extreme consumption of wine is severely criticized. In order to make better sense about the underlying discourse, I will also take into view the various opinions about (heavy) drinking by various European writers in the Middle Ages and the early modern age.

Courtly Romances and Courtly Behavior

High medieval poets tend to place the veil of silence over this phenomenon, but a critical reading of relevant texts especially from the late Middle Ages will indicate that the seemingly civilized world of the courts and also of the urban classes was not at all by necessity a place of high ethical and moral values and political and social stability and peacefulness. Heavy drinking easily proves to be a significant challenge to the ideals which the literary documents project. As today, when an individual loses self-control through alcohol, the basic social norms are at risk and courtly society at large is challenged to handle this problem both internally and externally.

What happens in medieval narratives when the protagonists are not fighting in a war, do not engage in a tournament, when they do not have to cope with some other challenges, and are simply enjoying their free time? The iconic Round Table was not only the site of courtly celebrations, but also represented a framework for the pleasures and leisure pursued by the members of courtly society. Major events occur before and after the dinner, or interruptions happen that propel one of the members to go on a quest, but the festivities still assume a major role of courtly life. While scholars have already examined quite extensively the dimension of foodstuff, food preparation, meals, table manners, and the like, or have examined courtly entertainment during such an event in the form of music, dancing, or acrobatic performances (tumblers), the issue of drinking wine, above all, that is, the problem of getting drunk, and correlated misbehavior are rarely addressed, at least in the world of Arthurian literature.

The focus of this paper will rest on late medieval German literary texts, but there are, of course, many other examples in older (*Beowulf*) or later periods (Shakespeare) reflecting on the danger of alcohol, and as soon as we use this specific critical lens, we can easily detect the underbelly of high courtly culture as well throughout time (see also the *fabliaux*, comic sermons, *novelle*, *mæren*, tales, etc.). In fact, both twelfth-century Byzantine culture and the world of high medieval Old Norse epic poems reveal the true extent to which alcohol

was present everywhere and served as a central beverage for public enjoyment, either alone or in company.

All forms of entertainment or leisure activities can get out of hand, as has always been the case in the past and the present, and those very transgressions allow us today to gain an intriguing perspective on specific groups in society and their values and norms. In this regard, the topic of drunkenness, if and when addressed, proves to be revelatory concerning the degree to which moral and ethical ideals and standards were truly upheld. The institution of the tournament, especially the growing number of casualties since the twelfth century, illustrates this phenomenon quite well. Although the Church and the various kings tried hard to fight against it and ban all efforts to organize tournaments, their history continued well into the early modern age.¹ Similarly, courtly society as reflected in literary narratives was deeply predicated on the ideals of the Round Table, but excess consumption of wine was certainly the case as well, as we learn from Konrad von Haslau's *Der Jüngling* (ca. 1270 or 1280). This paper will thus explore the negative sides of one form of pleasure, drinking of wine in company, as Konrad outlined it already very critically² which was certainly of considerable concern for those who watched over proper behavior, ethical norms, and moral concepts. The famous didactic poet Hugo von Trimberg formulated this most poignantly in his *Der Renner* (ca. 1300), where he outlines the countless prob-

1 We learn much about the critical issues concerned with knights dying in tournaments through the canonical debate about whether the fallen men could receive a Christian burial or not. See Romedio Schmitz-Esser, *Der Leichnam im Mittelalter: Einbalsamierung, Verbrennung und die kulturelle Konstruktion des toten Körpers*. *Mittelalter-Forschungen*, 48 (2014; Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2016), 520–26. See also the contribution to this volume by Alan Murray.

2 Konrad von Haslau, *Der Jüngling, nach der Heidelberger Handschrift Cpg. 341 mit den Lesarten der Leipziger Handschrift 946 und der Kalocsaer Handschrift (Cod. Bodmer 72)*, ed. Walter Tauber. *Altdeutsche Textbibliothek*, 97 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1984); for a quick introduction, see, for instance, Elisabeth Wunderle, “Konrad von Haslau,” *Literatur Lexikon: Autoren und Werke deutscher Sprache*, ed. Walther Killy. Vol. 6 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Lexikon Verlag, 1990), 482; Hans-Friedrich Rosenfeld, “Konrad von Haslau,” *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, ed. Fritz Wagner. Vol. 12 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1979), 541–42. For studies on alcoholism at least prior to 1900, see the contributions to *Drink in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Susanne Schmid and Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp. *Perspectives in Economic and Social History*, 29 (London: Brookfield, VT; Pickering & Chatto, 2014); for a global overview, see Roderick Phillips, *Alcohol: A History* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); cf. also Azéline Jaboulet-Vercherre, *The Physician, the Drinker, and the Drunk: Wine's Uses and Abuses in Late Medieval Natural Philosophy*. *Bibliothèque d'histoire culturelle du Moyen Age*, 14 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014). As to the correlation between alcohol and violence in the Middle Ages, see Reinhold Kaiser, together with Marie-Thérèse Kaiser-Guyot, *Trunkenheit und Gewalt im Mittelalter* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2002).

lems resulting from over-drinking and warns his audience: “Übel der trinket ze aller stunden, / Swer got niht hât in herzen grunde” (He who drinks all the time without having God in his heart is doing badly).³

Joachim Bumke has already assembled a range of literary episodes with similar situations, such as in Wolfram von Eschenbach’s *Parzival* and *Willehalm*, in the anonymous *Nibelungenlied*, in Wernher der Gartenære’s *Helmbrecht* and in a variety of late medieval didactic works, such as Hugo von Trimberg’s *Renner*.⁴ However, he does not consider late medieval literature where heavy drinking is profiled more explicitly both in a facetious and moralizing fashion, and he does not question how we would have to read those comments in social and political terms. Anna Kathrin Bleuler has now also applied a cultural-semiotic lens for an analysis of the descriptions of meals in Wolfram’s *Parzival*, yet she does not engage with specific drinking issues.⁵ We could also consider the vast body of pre-modern sermon literature, because those authors regularly addressed moral and ethical transgressions, sinfulness, and even criminal behavior, including the deadly sin of gluttony, but that would be the topic of another paper.⁶

3 Hugo von Trimberg, *Der Renner*, ed. Gustav Ehrismann. Mit einem Nachwort und Ergänzungen von Günther Schweikle. Deutsche Nachdrucke. Reihe: Texte des Mittelalters (1909; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970), vol. II, 39, vv. 10357–58. For some critical comments on this comprehensive didactic work, see Jutta Goheen, *Mensch und Moral im Mittelalter: Geschichte und Fiktion in Hugos von Trimberg ‘Der Renner’* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990); Inés de la Cuadra, *Der ‘Renner’ Hugos von Trimberg: Allegorische Denkformen und literarische Traditionen*. Germanistische Texte und Studien, 63 (Hildesheim, Zürich, and New York: Olms-Weidmann, 1999); Rudolf Kilian Weigand, *Der “Renner” des Hugo von Trimberg: Überlieferung, Quellenabhängigkeit und Struktur einer spätmittelalterlichen Lehrdichtung* Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter, 35 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2000); Albrecht Classen, “Thomasin von Zerclaere’s *Der Wælsche Gast* and Hugo von Trimberg’s *Renner*. Two Middle High German Didacticians Focus on the Gender Relationship,” *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*, ed. Juanita Ferros Ruys. Disputatio, 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 205–29. The issue of drunkenness, or of gluttony, in this major didactic encyclopedia-like poem has not yet been analyzed sufficiently.

4 Joachim Bumke, *Höfische Kultur: Literatur und Gesellschaft im hohen Mittelalter*. Vol. 1 (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1986), 271–75.

5 Anna Kathrin Bleuler, *Essen – Trinken – Liebe: Kultursemiotische Untersuchung zur Poetik des Alimentären in Wolframs ‘Parzival’*. Bibliotheca Germanica, 62 (Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto Verlag, 2016).

6 See, for instance, the *Fasciculus morum: A Fourteenth-Century Preacher’s Handbook*, ed. and trans. Siegfried Wenzel (University Park, PA, and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), 629. See also Richard Newhauser, *The Treatise on Vices and Virtues in Latin and the Vernacular*. Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, 68 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993);

Of course, we have to keep in mind that courtly poets generally attempted to project an ideal and maybe also idyllic setting, so it does not come as a surprise that they rarely mention individual failure, shortcomings, or depravity.⁷ Nevertheless, as this paper will highlight, especially in late medieval narratives we hear more often than not about revelries that entail excessive drinking and subsequent drunkenness. Scholars have commonly identified the period from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century as highly prone to “Trunksucht” (alcohol addiction) or as a “Jahrhundert der Trinkerei und Völlerei, zumindest in den germanischen Ländern” (a century of heavy drinking and gluttonous consumption of food, at least in the Germanic countries).⁸

To be sure, various comments in Old English poetry (*Riddles*), for instance, or in *Beowulf*, not to mention in the various Icelandic sagas, indicate that the issue itself was of universal relevance and viewed from quite complex perspectives. Moreover, if we consider the poetic testament by the infamous François Villon (1431–after 1463), which illustrates the enormous popularity of Parish taverns and the consumption of alcohol there, and then the famous Medieval Spanish novel *La Celestina* (1499) by Fernando de Rojas, for instance, we easily find evidence that moderate to heavy drinking was quite common in other countries during the centuries as well and was not viewed negatively. Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) offered rather mild, if not even tolerant opinions about occasional drunkenness in his famous *Essays* (1580), pointing out that the ancients were not really opposed to it and that contemporary medical doctors at time even rec-

see also the contributions to *The Seven Deadly Sins: From Communities to Individuals*, ed. Richard Newhauser. Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, 123 (Leiden: Brill, 2007).
 7 Jan Rüdiger, *Aristokraten und Poeten: Die Grammatik einer Mentalität im tolosanischen Hochmittelalter*. Europa im Mittelalter, 4 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001).

8 Roland Bitsch, “Trinken, Getränke, Trunkenheit,” *Essen und Trinken in Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Vorträge eines interdisziplinären Symposions vom 10.–13. Juni 1987 an der Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen*, ed. Irmgard Bitsch, Trude Ehlert, and Xenja von Ertzdorff (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1987), 207–16; here 210. See also A. Lynn Martin, *Alcohol, Sex, and Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Early Modern History: Society and Culture (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave, 2001). For the Old English riddles, contained in the *Book of Exeter* (tenth century), especially riddle 27, see *The Exeter Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie. The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936); *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book*, edited by Craig Williamson (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1977). As to drinking in *Beowulf*, see Fidel Fajardo-Acosta, “Intemperance, Fratricide, and the Elusiveness of Grendel,” *English Studies* 73.3 (1992): 205–10.

ommended heavy drinking for health reasons and as a moderate form of pleasure, especially useful in old age.⁹

Food historians such as Sandrine Lavaud suggest that the production of red wine increased dramatically by the late Middle Ages, and hence also its consumption far and wide and even among the members of the lower social classes.¹⁰ Such generalities, however, would need to be verified, and we would also have to shift the focus away from consumption per se to the purpose of drinking alcohol during leisure time or while relaxing in excess. Further, we will have to assess critically to what extent we can deduce retroactively what those references in literary reflections from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries might tell us about the actual pleasure and leisure time in earlier narratives involving alcohol.¹¹

By contrast, would we even be justified to assume that drunkenness was not even addressed in courtly romances and other verse narratives? In contrast to the later period, so it seems at first sight, the world of King Arthur with the knights of the Round Table tends to appear as an idyllic projection of a utopian entity, but in many literary manifestations, such as in Marie de France's *lai* "Lanval" (ca. 1190/1200), deep trouble and problems undermine this image after all, as a closer analysis easily reveals. As much as festivities and celebrations dominate the court, there is much injustice, corruption, and lack of self-control. Vices emerge much more commonly than virtues, and yet, at the end, the protagonist/s succeed in overcoming the conflicts and manage to 'heal' courtly society

9 David A. Fein, *François Villon Revisited*. Twayne's World Authors Series, 864 (New York: Twayne Publishers; London, Mexico City, et al.: Prentice Hall International, 1997), 38–40; Fernando de Rojas, *Celestina*. Trans. with an Afterword by Peter Bush. Intro. by Juan Goytisolo (London: Penguin, 2009), 103. *Celestina* specifies how much she is drinking: "half a dozen glasses with each meal and I never drink more" (103). She is, however, severely criticized and accused of being a drunk. For earlier examples of excessive drinking in medieval Spain, see Fidel Fajardo-Acosta, "The King is Dead, Long Live the Game: Alfonso X, el Sabio, and the *Libro de açedrex, dados e tablas*," *eHumanista* 31 (2015): 489–523; here 500, n. 36.

10 Sandrine Lavaud, "Ferments d'une civilisation viticole," *Voyage aux pays du vin: Histoire, anthologie, dictionnaire*, ed. Françoise Argod-Dutard, Pascal Chavret, and Sandrine Lavaud (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2007), 275–325; here 302. See also Wendy Pfeffer, *Le festin du troubadour: Nourriture, société et littérature en Occitanie (1100–1500)* (Cahors Cedex: La Louve éditions, 2016), 114–23. Michel Montaigne, "Essays," *The Complete Works of Montaigne: Essays. Travel Journal. Letters*. Newly trans. Donald M. Frame (1943; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957), 248.

11 Ernst Schubert, *Essen und Trinken im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006), 169–205; Melitta Weiss-Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*. Food through History (Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press, 2004), discusses wine quite frequently, but does not exam the social-critical implications of drunkenness.

by reconstituting the traditional ideals through their personal efforts to correct their own faults or exposing the failings of others¹² – except that Lanval does not gain his full redemption and finds rescue only in escaping to Avalon, the medieval utopia. Curiously, we rarely learn anything about drinking parties or problems with alcohol because, as we may assume, the poets want us to perceive that world in idealistic terms before the collapse occurs, after all.

Another impressive example would be the fourteenth-century alliterative romance, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (ca. 1360/1370). Hardly has Sir Gawain reached the Castle Hautdesert shortly before Christmas and has been welcomed by the jolly host, does Bertilak suggest to him that it would be most appropriate for them to engage in a game during which he himself would go hunting all day, while Gawain would stay home and find out for himself how he could make some intriguing gains in the castle; that is, conquering a woman's favor. As it turns out quickly, Bertilak intends to test Gawain's honor and his ethical steadfastness, which is also the foundation for the ominous decapitation game which he is playing with his ignorant partner. Gawain is severely challenged by Bertilak's indirect erotic seduction attempts, when the wife comes to his bedroom early in the morning to play her part in her husband's scheme. Despite all of his best intentions and efforts to maintain his honor and respect his host in every regard, especially not committing adultery with his wife, he actually fails at the end when he accepts from her the green belt that promises to protect his life. The Green Knight (Bertilak) knows about it as well, of course, but he later forgives his opponent for this small infraction because he played his game very well even under the greatest erotic temptations.¹³ The whole experience is explained away as Morgan's attempt to frighten Guinevere, and the court laughs before returning to their feasting.

12 *The Lais of Marie de France: Text and Translation*, ed. and trans. by Claire M. Waters (Peterborough, Ont., and Tonawanda, NY: Broadview, 2018), 162–95; Albrecht Classen, "Outsiders, Challengers, and Rebels in Medieval Courtly Literature: The Problem with the Courts in Courtly Romances," *Arthuriana* 26.3 (2016): 67–90.

13 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: A Dual-Language Version*, ed. and trans. William Vantuono. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1265 (New York and London: Garland, 1991); cf. also Albrecht Classen, "Erotik als Spiel, Spiel als Leben, Leben als Erotik: Komparatistische Überlegungen zur Literatur des europäischen Mittelalters," *Mediaevistik* 2 (1989): 7–42; Jefferey H. Taylor, "Semantic Social Games and the Game of Life in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and Arrow-Odd's Saga," *The Medieval Forum* 6 (2007), online at <http://www.sfsu.edu/~medieval/Volume6/taylor.html> (last accessed on May 24, 2019); Ad Putter, "The Ways and Words of the Hunt: Notes on Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, the Master of Game, Sir Tristrem, Pearl, and Saint Erkenwald," *The Chaucer Review* 40.4 (2006): 354–85. There is, of course, much more research on this 'classic' medieval alliterative romance than can be reviewed here.

Where is the difference here between the earnest and the playful, between the human and divine realm, between materiality and spirituality – a fundamentally dialectical concept undergirding medieval and early modern culture?¹⁴ As medieval poets regularly indicate, although scholarship has not considered this phenomenon sufficiently, life even at court was not simply dominated by strife, struggle, challenges, and war; instead, the members of the Round Table, and also other protagonists, constantly take a break, they celebrate, turn to feasting,¹⁵ and enjoy their free time, before the new danger arises and calls upon them to pursue their quest. Without placing too much attention to the issue of drinking, the narrator nevertheless constantly emphasizes that plenty of wine was served at any of the various feasts mentioned in the text, such as: “And the most winning wine forthwith each time” (v. 981), or, “They drank, and did dally, and delivered light talk” (v. 1114). Comparing this scene with the one at King Arthur’s court at the beginning, we begin to realize how much those seemingly harmless celebrations are based on huge meals with many courses and extensive consumption of alcoholic drinks: “Each two had dishes twelve, / Bright wine and beer with froth” (vv. 128–29), and later: “For though men are merry in mind when they mix strong drinks” (497).

This is the case as well with famous Parzival in Wolfram von Eschenbach’s eponymous romance (ca. 1205), here to draw also from a Middle High German example. When the young hero has arrived at King Arthur’s court, being still very uncouth and ignorant, he first encounters Ither, the Red Knight, who had just committed a severe transgression and is now waiting for any challenger to redeem his own honor. The reason for his anger seems to be the result of a fight at the dinner table, the cause of which is never fully explained: “I rode to the Table Round and claimed my lands. My clumsy hand snatched up this cup, and so the wine was spilt into my lady Ginover’s lap. This I did to assert my title.”¹⁶ Was he drunk, were they all intoxicated from the wine, and was

14 See the fundamental reflections on this issue by Max Wehrli, *Literatur im deutschen Mittelalter: Eine poetologische Einführung* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam Jun., 1984), 163–81.

15 Wendy Pfeffer, *Le festin du troubadour* (see note 10).

16 Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, trans. A. T. Hatto (London: Penguin, 1980), 84 (Book III, chapter 146, vv. 20–24); for a critical edition, see Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival: Studienausgabe*. Mittelhochdeutscher Text nach der sechsten Ausgabe von Karl Lachmann. Übersetzung von Peter Knecht. Einführung zum Text von Bernd Schirok (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998); for critical perspectives in general and a solid overview of the current research, see Heiko Hartmann, *Einführung in das Werk Wolframs von Eschenbach*. Einführungen Germanistik (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2015); cf. also the good selection of relevant research literature, 124–30; Joachim Bumke, *Wolfram von Eschenbach*. 8th, completely rev. ed. Sammlung Metzler, 36 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2004). See also the contributions to *A Companion to*

this hence the reason for the bickering to erupt? The poet-narrator shrouds all this in silence. Much later, when everyone is celebrating the arrival of the protagonist in their midst once again, he has achieved great fame and enjoys a universal reputation. However, he has, unknown to them all, really badly failed in not asking the relevant question when he had been allowed to visit the Grail castle. Parzival, having been informed by traditional teachings granted him by his mother shortly before his departure from home, and later at Gurnemanz's castle where he learned the basics of courtly behavior, especially with respect to the women, Wolfram basically set-up this quest motive as the panacea for all woes of his society.

But first, at the very moment of the highest festivities, the Grail messenger, Cundrie, joins them and reveals the truth about the protagonist and his family dynasty, expelling Parzival from the community and forcing him to pursue a very long quest that ultimately will make it possible for him, after many trials and tribulations, to recover the lost grace and to return to his uncle, the Grail King Anfortas, and then to ask the long awaited question, which releases him and the court from all suffering.¹⁷ Much remains unspoken here, but we can read between the lines that wine flows freely and alcohol appears to have its effect on the members of the Round Table.

Courtly poets were profoundly aware of the intricate tension between the public and the private, between social-ethical principles and concrete and pragmatic aspects concerning life at court, where festivities highlighted the essential ideals of courtly life. Nevertheless, at the very peak of social happiness, collapse is near-by, brought about by failures to uphold laws, ethics, ideals, or religious values. Violence then tends to break out, or the protagonists simply leave the court and find their own way. Disagreement, arguments, and bickering are not rare in courtly romances.

By contrast, in late medieval literature, those conflicts often find their expression through references to drinking alcohol, sometimes to excess. This paper will next examine how social conflicts emerge, how harmony and the community are disrupted, and how disagreements threaten social peace, in a selection of thirteenth-, fourteenth-, and fifteenth-century verse narratives and other texts, commonly induced by excessive drinking during leisure time.

Wolfram's 'Parzival', ed. Will Hasty. *Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1999). The literature on Wolfram is simply legion.

17 Wendy Pfeffer, *Le festin du troubadour* (see note 10).

The Issue of Drinking Alcohol and of Drunkenness in the Late Middle Ages

There might be at least two, if not three major reasons why a late medieval author would linger on drinking habits and types of alcoholic beverages. First, a poet could try to enhance the celebratory impression of court festivities or meals in all their splendor by discussing the quantity and quality of wine being served. Or there could be, second, the intention to ridicule and reject preposterous figures who resort to wine instead of water or beer because they want to claim a higher social status than granted them by birth right. Foodstuff and drinks commonly carry social and cultural values, both today and in the Middle Ages, so the careful examination of comments in literary and didactic texts about extreme consumption of wine, above all, allows us to gain a better understanding of social conditions in the pre-modern age.¹⁸ Thirdly, however, we can also recognize a number of satirical texts that ridicule alcoholics and the excesses of drinking parties, such as some of the songs in the *Carmina Burana* (no. 196, no. 200, et al.) or Der Stricker's "Der Weinschwelg" (The Heavy Drinker of Wine; ca. 1220–1240) that aimed at more rigid and stern warning about the dangers of alcohol in the first place, easily leading to misbehavior, if not even depravities.¹⁹

18 Günter Wiegmann, *Alltags- und Festspeisen in Mitteleuropa: Innovationen, Strukturen und Regionen vom späten Mittelalter bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Marburg: Elwert, 1967); Vanina Leschziner, "Epistemic Foundations of Cuisine: A Socio-Cognitive Study of the Configuration of Cuisine in Historical Perspective," *Theory and Society* 35.4 (2006): 421–43; *Le interazioni fra economica e ambiente biologico nell'Europa preindustriale. Secc. XIII–XVIII – Economic and Biological Interactions in Pre-Industrial Europe from the 13th to the 18th Centuries*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi. Prato: Fondazione Istituto internazionale di storia economica "F. Datini" Pubblicazioni. Serie II, Atti delle "settimane di studio" e altri convegni, 41 (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2010); Paul Freedman, "Introduction. A New History of Cuisine," *Food: the History of Taste*, ed. Paul Freedman (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 7–33; Sierra Clark Burnett and Ray Krishnendu, "Sociology of Food," *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, ed. Jeffrey M. Pilcher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 117–34; see now Peter Stabel and Inneke Baatsen, "At Home and on the Road: Comparing Food Cultures in the Medieval Low Countries," *Travel, Time, and Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time: Explorations of World Perceptions and Processes of Identity Formation*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 22 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 331–58.

19 *Carmina Burana*. Texte und Übersetzungen. Mit den Miniaturen aus der Handschrift und einem Aufsatz von Peter und Dorothee Diemer, ed. Benedikt Konrad Vollmann. Bibliothek des Mittelalters, 13 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1987), songs of drinking and gambling, nos. 187–226; Der Stricker, *Verserzählungen*, vol. II. *Mit einem Anhang: Der Weinschwelg*,

Alcohol (Wine) in the Middle Ages: A Brief Overview

Numerous historians have already addressed the production and consumption of beer and wine throughout the Middle Ages in concrete terms, the latter of which especially having served during mass in memory of Christ's Last Supper.²⁰ Derived directly from the Roman world, viticulture was of extreme importance for courtly society and the Christian Church; there was hardly any medieval monastery that would not have tried to grow its own grapes or own some vineyards in those regions that were more adequate for this purpose in terms of climate and soil.

Moreover, as Julian Hitner points out,

Monastic orders were heavily responsible for the planting of vines in a large number of areas, thus fostering a great deal of production. They sponsored the growth of vineyards in several regions that are now in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. By the ninth century, much of the land in Lombardy for instance was used for the planting and care of vineyards. As might be expected, there were certain incentives or motives for monastic orders to plant vineyards. Though many of Europe's vineyards were owned by monastic foundations, they were largely cultivated by both monks and peasants – particularly the latter. During the Early Middle Ages and beyond, many villages throughout Europe were clustered near abbeys. Therefore, in sponsoring and encouraging the spread of viticulture among the peasants of these villages, an abbey was able to collect a larger tithe from its parishioners.²¹

Wine was also of great importance for medical treatments and cooking, such as in Arnaldus of Villanova's (ca. 1239/1240–1311) *Liber de vinis* which covers the

ed. Hanns Fischer. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 68 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1977), no. XVIII, 42–58.

20 Richard W. Ungar, *Beer in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Hanneke Wilson, *Wine & Words in Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (London: Duckworth, 2003); Enrico Menestò, "Viticulture and Wine in the Early Middle Ages," *Vino: Tra mito e cultura*, ed. Maria Grazia Marchetti Lungarotti, and Mario Torelli (Milan: Skira, 2006), 63–70; see also the contributions to *Wine and the Vine: An Historical Geography of Viticulture and the Wine*, ed. Tim Unwin (New York and London: Routledge, 1991).

21 See Desmond Seward, *Monks and Wine*, with a forward by Hugh Johnson (London: Mitchell Beazley Publishers Limited, 1979); Hugh Johnson, *Vintage: The Story of Wine* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989); Jancis Robinson, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Wine* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Roderick Phillips, *A Short History of Wine* (London: Penguin Books, 2000).

widest range of types of wines and their application.²² All medieval recipe books and household books mention wine and its multiple uses; similarly, many trading accounts confirm how much wine was merchandised all over medieval Europe,²³ strongly connecting the Mediterranean with the world north of the Alps.²⁴ The development of vineyards, the expansion of wine-growing regions, the improvement of wines, its transportation and sale, and the various levels of wine quality for individual social classes among the customers have been the topics of much historiographical research. Studying the expansion or shrinkage of wine growing regions allows us to comprehend indirectly the changes of medieval climate, and since wine was a major economic commodity, we can easily use information about wine in chronicles and other reports for an analysis of medieval trading patterns.²⁵

22 Arnaud de Villeneuve, *Le Livre des vins*, traduit du latin, présenté et annoté par Patrick Gireu (Perpignan: Les Éditions de la Merci, 2011). More broadly, see, for instance, Mareike Temmen, *Das 'Abdinghofer Arzneibuch'. Edition und Untersuchung einer Handschrift mittelniederdeutscher Fachprosa* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2006); for a broad introduction, see Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007).

23 Susan Rose, *The Wine Trade in Medieval Europe 1000–1500* (London: Continuum, 2011). Some medieval medical recipes called for regular drinking of wine, others advised against it. See, for instance, Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 5498, 157^{ra}: “In dem monad soltu alle tag nuchterlingen trinck[e]n einen tranck weins” (In that month [January] you should drink a cup of wine every day in the evening). See also Cgm 5498, 157^{ra} (p. 187), Cgm 5499, 1r (p. 199), Cgm 6351, 49r (p. 519), Cgm 5921, 39ra (p. 307), et passim. For a description of all those manuscripts, see now Elisabeth Wunderle, *Die deutschen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München: Die mittellalterlichen Handschriften aus Cgm 5255–7000 einschließlich der althochdeutschen Fragmente Cgm 5248*. *Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum Bibliothecae Monacensis*, Vol. 9 (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2018).

24 For a detailed historical analysis, accompanied by an extensive bibliography, see Otto Volk, “Weinbau und Weinabsatz im späten Mittelalter: Quellen und Forschungen zur spätmittelalterlichen Weinbaugeschichte: Forschungsstand und Forschungsprobleme,” *Weinbau, Weinhandel und Weinkultur: 6. Alzeier Kolloquium 1990*, ed. Alois Gerlich. *Geschichtliche Landeskunde*, 40 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1993), 49–163; also available online at <http://www.region.algeschichte.net/bibliothek/texte/aufsaeetze/volk-weinbau.html> (last accessed on April 29, 2018). For a quite extensive summary of what we know about medieval foodstuff and beverages, see https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esskultur_im_Mittelalter (last accessed on April 29, 2018). The anonymous author has thoroughly compiled much of our current knowledge about this topic, added excellent illustrations, and an extensive bibliography.

25 Albrecht Classen, “Globalerwärmung im Mittelalter als Grundlage für die Entstehung der höfischen Liebe?,” *Wandlungsprozesse der Mentalitätsgeschichte*, ed. Peter Dinzelbacher and Friedrich Harrer (Baden-Baden: Deutscher Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2015), 121–46.

Beer – not to mention mead, ale, and cider as alcoholic drinks mostly consumed in northern Europe during the early Middle Ages by members of the lower classes – was also of great importance, but it never enjoyed the same social reputation and esteem as wine, although many monasteries were famous for their brewing facilities. To be sure, however, beer also had a huge economic impact on all of medieval society and was a standard drink especially for the urbanites and peasants to replace water, which was not safe as a beverage.²⁶

Curiously, however, when we examine what courtly authors and other poets have to say about alcohol, we face a puzzling conundrum, since it seems as if alcohol was of no major concern at the courts, although the very opposite must have been the case in real life. Countless times courtly romances reflect on major festivals and splendid dinners, at which alcohol was certainly consumed, and this probably also in excess, but literary documents hardly go into any details about actual drinking habits and types of libations. King Arthur presides at innumerable feasts, inviting his guests and members of the Round Table to enjoy their meal and hence their drinks, but specific details are barely ever mentioned. Many modern wines draw from this mythical figure for their labels, but we would be hard pressed to identify exactly some texts in courtly literature where the individual types of wines or their quality would be mentioned, or where, *horribile dictu*, the effects of heavy drinking would be discussed.

One major reason might have been that wine was a too common commodity, used every day by virtually everyone at least among the upper classes in continental Europe and in the British Isles, so poets would not have considered it as necessary to engage with this beverage in any particular fashion, unless they addressed religious or didactic concerns. Mystical authors, such as Hildegard of Bingen and Mechthild of Magdeburg apparently enjoyed employing wine-related metaphors since they could thus relay more easily their visionary images reflecting their own bodily transubstantiation – adapting the fermentation process

26 Christine von Blanckenburg, *Die Hanse und ihr Bier: Brauwesen und Bierhandel im hansischen Verkehrsgebiet*. Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte. Neue Folge, 51 (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2001); *DRINCK VND EST, GOTS NIT FERGES: Lebensmittel im mittelalterlichen und frühzeitlichen Neuss: Gebrauch, Handel und Produktion: Zubereitung, Produktion und Handel*, ed. Carl Pause (Neuss: Clemens-Sels-Museum, 2009); Matthias Wiesmann, *Bier und wir: Geschichte der Brauereien und des Bierkonsums in der Schweiz* (Baden, Switzerland: Hier + jetzt, 2011); Seth C. Rasmussen, *The Quest for Aqua Vitae: The History and Chemistry of Alcohol from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2014). Virtually every beer-producing region in Germany and other parts of medieval Europe has witnessed the publication of some relevant studies on beer brewing, breweries, beer pubs, etc.

transforming the grape juice into wine.²⁷ Medieval secular Jewish poetry also contained references to wine, as Andreas Lenhardt has pointed out recently, to which we could easily add other data concerning the relationship between alcohol and mystical experiences, such as in the Persian Rumi's mystical poetry. It would also be important to consider the encomium on wine by the eleventh-century Byzantine-Greek savant, philosopher, political advisor, and poet, later monk, Michael Psellos (1017 or 1018–1078), according to whom wine was God's gift to mankind after the deluge. Just as many other medieval medical authorities, he praised the healthy properties of wine in many cases of sickness and melancholy.²⁸

27 Elisabeth Vavra, "Weinstock, Weinlaub, Weintraube als christliches Symbol in der Kunst des Mittelalters," *Probleme des niederösterreichischen Weinbaus in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart: Vorträge des neunten Symposions des Niederösterreichischen Instituts für Landeskunde. Retz, 4.–6. Juli 1988*, ed. Helmuth Feigl and Willibald Rosner. Studien und Forschungen aus dem Niederösterreichischen Institut für Landeskunde, 13 (Vienna: Niederösterreichisches Institut für Landeskunde, 1990), 25–47. See now Debra L. Stoudt, "Elemental Well-Being: Water and Its Attributes in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period," *Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 19 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 193–220. For an excellent, well-illustrated webpage, see http://www.wineterroirs.com/2012/12/wine_in_the_middle_ages-.html. See also the report about an exhibition on wine in the Middle Ages, held at the Tour Joan Jean sans Peur in Paris, curated by Danièle Alexandre-Bidon. See online at: <https://rmbf.be/2018/01/21/exposition-le-vin-au-moyen-age/> (both last accessed on April 29, 2018). Volume 30 of the journal *Medievalia* (2009), ed. by Dana E. Stewart, was entirely dedicated to the topic of wine in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The contributors, working on the Middle Ages, discuss the relationship between wine and death (John Varriano), taste, dietary theory, and selections of wine (Allen J. Grieco), wine in sacred contexts (Francesca Canadé Sautman), and the Pseudo-Arnaldian treatise *De Vinis* (Azéline Jaboulet-Vercherre).

28 Andreas Lenhardt, "'Im Kelche ein Wunder': Zur profanen jüdischen Wein-Dichtung im Mittelalter," *Wein und Judentum*, ed. id. Jüdische Kulturgeschichte in der Moderne, 2 (Berlin: Neofelis-Verlag, 2014), 151–70. See already Johannes Hempel, *Mystik und Alkoholextase. Die Alkoholfraße in der Religion*, 3.1 (Hamburg: Neuland-Verlag, 1926). As to Rumi, see *Wine of Reunion: Arabic Poems of Rumi*, trans. and ed. Nesreen Akhtarkhavari and Anthony A. Lee. Arabic Literature and Language Series (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2017). Michael Psello, *Encomio del vino: Laus vini*, intro., trans., and notes by Lucio Coco (Florence: Olschki, 2018). This is a translation in Italian only. Psello states categorically: "Il vino è una cosa buona in ogni occasione e per tutti per chi è di buon umore è un ausilio all'intensificazione dell'allegria; è buono per chi è sano per la conservazione della salute; è una consolazione per chi è depressso ed è una cura per chi è malato" (16). Modern psychology and medicine might really disagree with this blanket statement. Revealingly, online webpages such as Wikipedia do not even mention this treatise. For a critical study, see Antonio Garzya, "Un encomio del vino inedito di Michele Psello," *Byzantion* 35.2 (1965): 418–28.

When we widen, for a moment, our perspective toward the Asian world, to gain insight into parallel cultures, we discover that the excessive drinking of wine, hence, drunkenness, was treated as a serious social, psychological, moral, and ethical problem in Mongol poetry as well. In the poem/song “How an Orphan Boy Argued with the Nine Champions of Genghis Khagan,” which has survived in multiple versions from the fourteenth century (?), the Nine Champions at first praise the joy of alcohol and highlight the extraordinary quality of wine as a catalyst for exceeding happiness. But then the orphan boy appears, the future Genghis Khan, he argues against them in a most cogent fashion, either condemning alcohol altogether or urging them all to drink wine only in moderation: “If one drinks blindly, is it not illness? / If one drinks moderately, is it not pleasure? / If one drinks obsessively, is it not craziness? / If one drinks wildly, is it not madness? / If one drinks continually, is it not trouble? / If one rejects it altogether, is it not wisdom? / If one drinks within reason, is it not pleasure? / If one drinks till one falls over, is it not stupidity?” Similarly, in medieval Arabic and Persian literature, the consumption of wine constituted a significant topic, if we think of the famous poets Abu Nuwas (756–814), Rudaki (859–940), and Manuchehri (d. 1040–1041), but here I have to leave the discussion of their works to other scholars.²⁹

If the excessive consumption of wine could trigger such a strongly negative response in the Mongolian culture (or rather a positive one in the Persian world), parallel to the position commonly assumed by clerical critics in western European medieval society, then we can conclude that here we are dealing with a universal topic of great significance. The experience of leisure activities, including the consumption of alcohol, has been a mainstay of human culture throughout time. Our subsequent observations addressing examples in medieval German literature can thus serve as a platform to uncover representative cases that shed light on universal issues.

Of course, at first sight we seem to be faced with the contrary situation, which is worth repeating here. The reasons for the phenomenon that alcohol is rarely mentioned in courtly literature are not hard to fathom since the poets normally focus on love and marriage, knightly prowess and courtliness, adventures, and religious aspects, and if they mention misbehavior, then that pertains

²⁹ *Mongolian Literature Anthology*, compiled and ed. C. R. Bawden (London: Kegan Paul, 2003), 150–51; for the Persian tradition, see Kamran Talattof, “What Kind of Wine Did Rudaki Desire?: Samanids’ Search for Cultural and National Identity,” *A Celebration in Honor of Dick Davis: The Layered Heart: Essays on Persian Poetry*, ed. A. A. Seyed-Ghorab (Washington, DC: Mage Publishers, 2019), 129–71. I thank the author for sharing his research with me before it appeared in print.

to the protagonists' arrogance and bragging, such as in the case of the notorious Keie or Kay, or social transgression, or criminal acts, such as rape, as in "The Wife of Bath's Tale" in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (ca. 1400). Neither the *lais* by Marie de France (fl. ca. 1170–ca. 1200) nor the famous courtly romances by Hartmann von Aue (fl. ca. 1180–ca. 1200), neither the romances dealing with the love affair between Tristan and Isolde (Bérout, Eilhard, Gottfried) nor any of the late medieval romances such as the anonymous *Wigamur*, The Stricker's *Daniel von dem Blühenden Tal*, or Konrad von Würzburg's *Partonopier* contain such mundane elements as references to (heavy) drinking parties and subsequent drunkenness, resulting in vomiting, violence, or other misbehavior. At first sight, it seems as if we would search almost in vain for references to alcohol in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, but then we discover significant passages after all, such as in the General Prologue, for instance, where we are told that the Franklin's face was glowingly red because of too much drinking of wine (334), that the Summoner is most fond of wine (637) and tends to break into some Latin phrases once being tipsy, and that the Host served them all heavy wine (750). And the Pardoner in his tale has much to moralize about the dangers of alcohol, referring to the biblical Lot, for example, and then to such authorities as Seneca, condemning wine, above all, as the gateway to becoming a victim in particular one of the seven deadly sins, gluttony (463–628). At the same time, this most evil pilgrim has to get drunk before he tells his tale, which narrates the story of three inebriated young men who go on a drunken rage throughout the streets to find death – and die. The Cook introduced in "The Manciple's Prologue" proves to be a severe alcoholic: "See how he gameth, lo, this drunken wight, / As though he wolde swolwe as anonright" (Fragment IX, 35–36).³⁰

Likewise, in the anonymous French collection of comparable tales, *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* (ca. 1460), alcohol practically does not matter, except that we are once told of a company of men who spend a lengthy time in the tavern, drinking heavily, and yet worry about their wives' complaints about and scolding of their drunken husbands.³¹ As this study will bring to light, alcohol has mattered centrally both in courtly life and in the world of the urban elites that could afford

30 Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Benson, 3rd. ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987); for an online version, see <http://english.fsu.edu/canterbury/> (last accessed on April 29, 2018). For a discussion of drinking in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and in the poetry by Deschamps, see Laura Kendrick, "Disfigured Drunkenness in Chaucer, Deschamps, and Medieval Culture," *Chaucer: Visual Approaches*, ed. Susanna Fein and David Raybin (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), 115–38.

31 *Les cent nouvelles nouvelles*, ed. Franklin P. Sweetser. Textes littéraires français, 127 (Geneva: Droz, 1966), tale 97.

to consumption of this expensive beverage. After all, courtly and urban society enjoyed considerable leisure time and thus naturally turned to drinking alcohol, as numerous didactic texts will illustrate. Most likely, members of the peasant class or craftsmen also enjoyed their drinks after work, or on holidays, but we have much less documentary evidence about either social group to pursue this topic at greater length. At the same time, we can be certain, and have plenty of evidence both in text and imagery, that the clergy was often a victim of excessive alcohol consumption as well, as many marginal drawings in medieval manuscripts and other sources demonstrate.

Pleasure and Leisure Drinking: Cultural-Historical Reflections

Within the framework of the larger topic determining the present volume, pleasure and leisure, it proves to be most valuable to examine how pre-modern writers reflected on the experiences with and responses to the consumption of alcohol, which has always been viewed with rather mixed feelings, both in the Middle Ages and today because drunkenness has regularly implied disorderly behavior, proneness to violence, and has caused disruption of social order. At the same time, at least within the Christian world, the enjoyment of wine, above all, has served centrally for the human need of pleasure and entertainment, of relaxation and company, fun and celebration. We are, as Jan Huizinga has poignantly formulated it, a *homo ludens*, and virtually all cultures have been predicated on the idea of play, whether we think of the Romans, the Middle Ages, or the Renaissance. As to the latter, he emphasizes,

The splendours of the Renaissance are nothing but a gorgeous and solemn masquerade in the accoutrements of an idealized past. ... The fanciful decorations in Renaissance architecture and the graphic arts, with their lavish use of classical motifs, are much more consciously playful than is the case with the mediaeval illuminator, suddenly inserting a drollery into his manuscript.³²

We would have to disagree with the last comment regarding the Middle Ages, but the overall observation probably holds true. Despite his own criticism of Huizinga's claims, Roger Caillois expanded on the notion of play and diversified it fur-

³² Jan Huizinga, *Homo ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (1944; Boston: The Beacon Press, 1950), 180. See also my much more detailed analysis of Huizinga's observations in the Introduction to this volume. I have also engaged with Caillois's remarks there.

ther, offering the following four categories of public playing: “*agôn* (competition), *alea* (chance), *mimicry* (simulation), and *ilinx* (vertigo).”³³ While Huizinga posited that culture is derived from play, Caillois argues that “[t]he spirit of play is essential to culture, but games and toys are historically the residues of culture” (58). Moreover, he insists that “play is a parallel, independent activity, opposed to the acts and decisions of ordinary life by special characteristics appropriate to play” (63). Altogether, we can take a middle road here and associate play with culture at large, determining it or deriving from it, especially if we consider not play as such, but leisure and entertainment as essentially complementary elements in real life.

Neither Huizinga nor Caillois have examined the role of alcohol and drinking in their social theories, although virtually all courtly romances and many didactic texts specifically address the feast or the festival at King Arthur’s court or any other.³⁴ The heroes in epic literature and the knights in romances always return home after their triumphs to glorious celebrations that consistently involve heavy consumption of alcohol. Its negative evaluation emerged, however, primarily in the later Middle Ages. This realization allows us hence to proceed further and to focus on this topic for the rest of this paper, in which I will expand considerably over previous research dealing with eating and drinking in the Middle Ages.³⁵ On the one hand, I will address the social critique implied in literary passages dealing with drinking; on the other, I will reflect on the drinking scenes presented as illustrations of how various social groups sought entertainment in the pre-modern world.

33 Roger Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games*, trans. from the French by Meyer Barash (1958; New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), viii (summary by Barash).

34 Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games* (see note 33), touches upon such issues as “vertigo and mimicry, ecstasy and simulation” (93), but he does not go into specifics and leaves out the topic that interests me here.

35 Christoph Cormeau, “Essen und Trinken in den deutschen Predigten Bertholds von Regensburg,” *Essen und Trinken in Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Vorträge eines interdisziplinären Symposions vom 10.–13. Juni 1978 an der Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen*, ed. Irmgard Bitsch, Trude Ehlert, and Xenja von Ertzdorff (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1987), 77–83; Hanneke Wilson, *Wine & Words in Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (London: Duckworth, 2003); Melitta Weiss Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times. Food Through History* (Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press, 2004), 48–53; Ernst Schubert, *Essen und Trinken im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006), 173–237; Richard W. Ungar, *Beer in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (see note 20); Enrico Menestò, “Viticulture and Wine in the Early Middle Ages,” *Vino: Tra mito e cultura*, ed. Maria Grazia Marchetti Lungarotti, and Mario Torelli (Milan: Skira, 2006), 63–70; see also the contributions to *Wine and the Vine: An Historical Geography of Viticulture and the Wine*, ed. Tim Unwin (New York and London: Routledge, 1991).

Undoubtedly, the central role of wine in medieval and early modern culture, especially among the elite and within the Christian Church, has been discussed already at length.³⁶ We can also draw on detailed scholarly discussion of wine and its properties in the late Middle Ages, such as by Arnaud de Villeneuve (1235–1311), also known as Arnaldus de Villa Nova,³⁷ whereas the negative effects of alcohol on the individual or entire groups, as debated by didactic writers, still represents, more or less, a desideratum.³⁸ As much as numerous critics voiced their warning against overly excessive drinking, as much do we observe an apparently irrepressible need for and interest in wine as the beverage of choice for all social gatherings by members of the upper social classes.³⁹ In particular, this paper examines how drinking parties are presented, how they evolve, what the poet might have to say about this leisure activity, and what it all matters for the overall development of the narrative plot.

36 Desmond Seward, *Monks and Wine*, with a forward by Hugh Johnson (London: Mitchell Beazley Publishers Limited, 1979); Hugh Johnson, *Vintage: The Story of Wine* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989); Otto Volk, "Weinbau und Weinabsatz im späten Mittelalter: Quellen und Forschungen zur spätmittelalterlichen Weinbaugeschichte: Forschungsstand und Forschungsprobleme," *Weinbau, Weinhandel und Weinkultur: 6. Alzeier Kolloquium 1990*, ed. Alois Gerlich. *Geschichtliche Landeskunde*, 40 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1993), 49–163; also available online at <http://www.regionalgeschichte.net/bibliothek/texte/aufsaeetze/volk-weinbau.html> (both last accessed on April 29, 2018). Jancis Robinson, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Wine* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Roderick Phillips, *A Short History of Wine* (London: Penguin Books, 2000); Hanneke Wilson, *Wine & Words in Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (London: Duckworth, 2003); Susan Rose, *The Wine Trade in Medieval Europe 1000–1500* (London: Continuum, 2011).

37 Arnaud de Villeneuve, *Le Livre des vins*, traduit du latin, présenté et annoté par Patrick Giffreu (Perpignan: Les Éditions de la Merci, 2011).

38 See <http://www.vinetowinecircle.com/en/> (last accessed on April 29, 2018). The volume 30 of the journal *Mediaevalia* (2009), ed. by Dana E. Stewart, was entirely dedicated to the topic of wine in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The contributors, working on the Middle Ages, discuss the relationship between wine and death (John Varriano), taste, dietary theory, and selections of wine (Allen J. Grieco), wine in sacred contexts (Francesca Canadé Sautman), and the Pseudo-Arnaldian treatise *De Vinis* (Azéline Jaboulet-Vercherre).

39 Azéline Jaboulet-Vercherre, *The Physician, the Drinker, and the Drunk: Wine's Uses and Abuses in Late Medieval Natural Philosophy*. *Bibliothèque d'histoire culturelle du Moyen Âge*, 14 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014). See also Gregory A. Austin, *Alcohol in Western Society from Antiquity to 1800: A Chronological History* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO Information Services, 1985); Tom Harpur, *The Spirituality of Wine* (Kelowna, British Columbia: Northstone Publishing, 2004).

Der Freudenleere's "Der Wiener Meerfahrt"

One of the best late medieval verse narratives dealing with the theme of drinking would be "Der Wiener Meerfahrt" (The Vienneses' Voyage) by an otherwise unknown poet, Der Freudenleere, from ca. 1271 to 1291.⁴⁰ At first sight, here we encounter a rather simple tale, which is determined by not much more than a heavy drinking party that eventually results in a nearly deadly accident. Nevertheless, at a closer look we can recognize numerous fascinating elements that shed important light on the social and cultural conditions of the late Middle Ages within an urban setting, allowing us to gain insight into common leisure time situations involving a larger group of well-to-do citizens, who, however, lose their self-control and create chaos because of their drunken behavior.⁴¹

Der Wiener Meerfahrt is contained in two manuscripts, one in Cologny-Genf, Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, Cod. Bodm. 72, fol. 85vb–90rb (first quarter of the fourteenth century), and the other in Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cpg 341, fol. 80vb–85ra (same time period). Both manuscripts ("Sammelhandschriften") consist of a large collection of very important similar verse narratives that seem to have been rather popular as a genre, even if individual texts might have been less attractive.⁴² Only those readers/listeners with a sense of sarcasm would have fully enjoyed this verse narrative, considering its rather negative commentary about the egregious misbehavior demonstrated by the members

40 Leif Ludwig Albertsen, "Die Moralphilosophie in der Wiener Meerfahrt." *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 98 (1969): 64–80; Hans-Friedrich Rosenfeld, "Der Freudenleere," *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, 2nd completely rev. and expanded ed. by Kurt Ruh et al. Vol. 2.3 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), cols. 913–15; Fritz Peter Knapp, "'Der Wiener Meerfahrt' von dem Freudenleeren: eine böhmische Satire auf das Wiener Ritterbürgertum?," *Ze hove und an der strâzen: Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters und ihr 'Sitz im Leben'. Festschrift Volker Schupp zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Anna Keck and Theodor Nolte (Stuttgart and Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1999), 61–70; as to late medieval miscellany manuscripts, see Sarah, Westphal, *Textual Poetics of German Manuscripts, 1300–1500* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 2003).

41 Jessalynn Bird, *Crusade and Christendom: Annotated Documents in Translation from Innocent III to the Fall of Acre, 1187–1291* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Reinhold Keiser, together with Marie-Thérèse Kaiser-Guyot, *Trunkenheit und Gewalt im Mittelalter*. Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2002); Azéline Jaboulet-Vercherre, *The Physician, the Drinker, and the Drunk: Wine's Uses and Abuses in Late Medieval Natural Philosophy* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014).

42 <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/werke/5423> (last accessed on April 29, 2018).

of this drinking party.⁴³ However, for our purposes, *Der Wiener Meerfahrt* allows us to investigate how a late medieval poet presented a drinking party and evaluated the effects of alcoholic intoxication on ordinary citizens.⁴⁴

In the prologue, the virtually anonymous poet Der Freudenleere voices the usual complaints about the decline in social ethics and morality since virtue can no longer be found. Materialism has replaced, as we would say today, idealism, and the ideal of honor has been eclipsed by greed for property and money (vv. 18–25). The subsequent tale is based on an event, as he claims, that took place in Vienna, where gold and silver are highly valued, which could be read as a not so subtle criticism of the ethical principles practiced there (vv. 52–54). Nevertheless, as he then asserts, the city deserves much praise because all the traditional courtly values are practiced there, “Sagen . singen . seiten spil” (v. 70, reciting, singing, and playing a string instrument), and yet, subsequently we clearly recognize how much there is to be criticized because of the great emphasis on money with which all worldly joys can be purchased, including the favors of young women (vv. 75–80).

Leaving those generalities behind, the narrator then tells his story about this astonishing drinking party where rich citizens and guests alike have come together to enjoy the wine, not holding back all evening, and quickly drunkenness sets in. However, the narrator does not allow negativity to come through on the surface, emphasizing, instead, that a good wine can cheer up any melancholy person (vv. 87–89). The party has assembled in a loft, and they are constantly served food and drink, and this over many hours, which makes everyone lose his mind – there are, apparently, only men together in that group. Humorously, the narrator draws on a physical metaphor, describing how their feet became round like balls, meaning that the alcohol prevents them from standing up straight (vv. 112–14). Moreover, they no longer recognize their own neighbors (vv. 117–18), and yet claim suddenly to be all related to each other (vv. 134–35).

The poet, however, does not only reflect upon their drinking habits, but also mirrors some of their silly talk, which pertains to the pilgrimage to Santiago de

⁴³ As to sarcasm in the pre-modern world, see now the contributions to *Words that Tear the Flesh: Essays on Sarcasm in Medieval and Early Modern Literature and Cultures*, ed. Alan Baragona and Elizabeth L. Rambo. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 21 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018).

⁴⁴ The text has been edited twice: *Gesamtabenteuer: Hundert altdeutsche Erzählungen*, ed. Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen (1850; now available online as well; 2nd rev. ed. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961); and *Der Wiener Meerfahrt*, ed. Richard Newald. Germanische Bibliothek, 30. Untersuchungen und Texte (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1930). Here I rely on Newald's edition.

Compostella (vv. 144–46) or a crusade to Prussia (v. 147), unless the latter might refer to a pilgrimage in that land as well. Some sink down to the ground and fall asleep, others feel a sudden rush of adrenalin and perform dances, until they also collapse. Finally, one of them suggests that they serve God with all their resources and embark on a voyage across the sea, i.e., to the Holy Land, as they agree to aim for Acre (v. 195), which was the last city in the hands of the crusaders until it fell in 1291. The company gets excited about this plan, so they order food and drink to be brought to their ship, which is, of course, nothing but pure fantasy, the result of their ever growing drunkenness (vv. 208–09), as the narrator underscores himself. The inn-keeper himself joins the group, apparently also drunk by that time, and contributes, at least verbally, to the stocking up of the ship (vv. 221–25), which consists, however, of even more wine. Through their role playing they all intensify their own drunkenness, which the narrator views with a certain degree of irony, but also with a considerable skepticism insofar as it results in the young men turning into old men, and the old men turning into young men (vv. 232–33).

This might be an indirect allusion to the motif of the ‘Fountain of Youth,’⁴⁵ but the scene presented here does not carry any erotic undertones, at it is not framed by any hopeful perspectives toward the future, and is basically meaningless in light of the utter drunkenness of those men involved. Because of the alcohol, all those men have turned into children, having lost their mind (vv. 260–61). However, not enough with that, the influence of the wine makes them sing in a chorus (vv. 277–80), which probably sounds rather familiar also for contemporary audiences today. In their stupor, they entrust their wives and children to their friends in case they might die on their pilgrimage (vv. 282–85), and the narrator goes so far as to identify those drunkards with foolish children (vv. 290–92).

Yet, while all this might have been rather hilarious, in the subsequent scene the high level of alcohol makes them believe that a storm is tossing their ship back and forth and threatens them with shipwreck. In order to pacify God, they choose a dead man in their ship, whom they carry to the side and throw overboard, as they imagine. The corpse, however, is not a dead person; instead, it is the body of one of the rich men (v. 369) who is not dead, but who has sunk to

⁴⁵ Anna Rapp, “Der Jungbrunnen in Literatur und bildender Kunst des Mittelalters,” Ph.D. Zürich 1976; Stefanie Knöll, “Vom Jungbrunnen zur Jungmühle: Phantasien von der ewigen Jugend,” *Altersphantasien im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Jürgen Wiener. *Studia humaniora*, 49 (Düsseldorf: düsseldorf university press, 2016), 135–60; *Badekultur von der Antike bis in die Neuzeit: Betrachtungen über das Badewesen von der Antike bis zur Gründung der See- und Thermalbäder in die Neuzeit* (Bad Nauheim: Jugendstilverein Bad Nauheim, 2017).

the floor, deeply asleep. Nevertheless, they pick him up and carry him to a steep window from where they let him fall down to the ground, hoping that this would appease the Creator.

Even though the poor man – at that point suddenly having sobered up because he is afraid of dying – is desperately resisting them, there is no use, so he falls down to the street and barely survives, having broken one of his arms and one of his legs. His painful shrieks fill the street, but the drunken companions upstairs simply sing louder and entirely ignore him (vv. 456–58). They continue to party until dawn, never stop drinking wine, and never even care about the suffering of the innocent victim below on the street.

In the morning, the neighbors arrive and first laugh about the drunken company, inquiring about the remaining wine. The revelers emphasize how much joy they have experienced, then they relate how they went on their pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and how they had managed to calm down the wild storm, God's wrath, with the help of the 'corpse' that they had thrown down into the water. This absurd story makes those who had arrived from their houses simply laugh because they find the invented story rather hilarious (v. 532). They also learn that both the inn-keeper and the city clerk lie among the other drunkards, deeply asleep, which makes it impossible to draw up the receipt for all the wine that they have consumed: "Noch was der vin vmbezalt" (539; and the wine was not yet paid). At first, they all burst out in laughter about their drunken neighbors, who had apparently simply transgressed the basic rules, as it might happen easily for those as well, who are still sober (v. 532). This laughter re-establishes their communal bonds and could make it possible for everyone to accept the situation with the heavy drinking party as a one-time transgression, which could have easily been copied by anyone else.⁴⁶

Then, however, reality dawns upon everyone, since the injured man attracts their attention, and now the sober citizens recognize what damage the drunkards

⁴⁶ There is much research on laughter in the pre-modern world, though this verse narrative has not yet been discussed in light of this theme; see, for instance, the contributions to *Komische Gegenwelten: Lachen und Literatur in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Werner Röske and Helga Neumann (Paderborn, Munich, et al.: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1999); Sebastian, Coxon, *Laughter and Narrative in the Later Middle Ages: German Comic Tales 1350–1525* (Leeds: Legenda, 2008); *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, Its Meaning, and Consequences*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 5 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2010); *Seliges Lächeln und höllisches Gelächter: Das Lachen in Kunst und Kultur des Mittelalters*, ed. Winfried Wilhelmy (Mainz: Dom- und Diözesanmuseum, 2012); *Lachen und Schweigen: Grenzen und Lizenzen der Kommunikation in der Erzählliteratur des Mittelalters*, ed. Werner Röske and Hans Rudolf Velten. *Trends in Medieval Philology*, 26 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017).

have caused, which angers them so badly that they would almost have attacked the revelers with their weapons. Of course, the perpetrators are so drunk that they do not fully understand the charge, do not comprehend what they have really done, and rather insist that they have enjoyed a wonderful time on their voyage (vv. 507–08). They relate their experiences on the ship, as if they had actually traveled in reality, and are fully convinced that they had faced serious difficulties when a storm had threatened them on the open sea. Moreover, as they emphasize, repeating their own actions now in a report to their sober neighbors, they had been fortunate to have been able to appease God's wrath when they threw a dead pilgrim overboard (vv. 522–31).

The neighbors find all this rather entertaining and laugh about the revelers' illusions, until they recognize that the drunkards, in their near stupor, almost would have killed one of their own. Since the badly injured man belonged to the highest social rank, his friends get severely enraged and are about to attack the revelers as perceived criminals, but wise men intervene, separate both groups, and allow the party guests to go home and to sleep for three days, finally sobering up again, after which they realize and regret their misdeeds, for which they have to pay a heavy fine (vv. 639–45).

Recently, some scholars have argued that this intriguing verse narrative entails a deeply unsettling tendency toward violence ("Gewaltgemeinschaft") and that the laughter erupting both during the drinking event and early in the morning reflects an uncanny community of drunken citizens ("Lachgemeinschaft").⁴⁷ A more sober analysis reveals only that the entire company of revelers is losing its mind, falling victim to the heavy consumption of wine, and then dream up the idea of going on a pilgrimage (certainly not a crusade, as has been argued before). There is considerable criticism against their lack of self-control and the subsequent violent action pertaining to the comatose drunkard on the floor, whom they throw out of the window. However, all efforts to recognize here a strategy to disrupt social and moral norms, to allow deeply seated aggression to come forth, have basically failed because the group of men only makes up its mind to go on a pilgrimage and to voyage to the Holy Land because they

47 Knapp, Fritz Peter. "'Der Wiener Meerfahrt' von dem Freudenleeren" (see note 38), 61–70; id., *Die Literatur des Spätmittelalters in den Ländern Österreich, Steiermark, Kärnten, Salzburg und Tirol von 1273 bis 1439*. I. Halbband: *Die Literatur in der Zeit der frühen Habsburger bis zum Tod Albrechts II. 1358* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1999); Silvan Wagner, "Die Lust an erzählter Gewalt: Virtuelle Gewaltgemeinschaften in *Der Wiener Meerfahrt*," *Gewaltgenuss, Zorn und Gelächter: Die emotionale Seite der Gewalt in Literatur und Historiographie des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Claudia Ansorge, Cora Dietl, and Titus Knäpper (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2015), 31–44.

have reached a level of alcoholic intoxication at which they can only fantasize and imitate what major role models before them have done. There are no specific class distinctions to be observed, as both rich and poor, powerful and insignificant men have come together in the tavern, all of them simply representing the citizenry of Vienna. Even the inn-keeper joins them and equally loses his mind over too much wine.⁴⁸

This *mære* sheds important light on the world of private entertainment and leisure activities in a late medieval city, such as wealthy and significant Vienna. Once alcohol is involved, as we observe here, social distinctions fall away, and all revelers enjoy the wine together. Drunkenness thus proves to be a remarkable leveler, at least during the night, while anger erupts in the morning when the neighbors discover the badly wounded man lying on the street.⁴⁹ While in courtly romances the festival at the Round Table brings all knights and ladies together, who thereby claim to be members of a harmonious social group, irrespective of the heavy drinking that certainly took place there as well, our verse narrative signals that drinking can also unify the members of the urban elite who turn to alcohol in their free time, and then abuse it, collectively.

Courtly authors consistently refrain from revealing the excess that undoubtedly happened during the great feasts, whereas *Der Freudenleere* focuses on this aspect exclusively and thus develops a successful satire on misbehavior of an entire group of people, whose actions during the long night illustrate in a nutshell what the poet regards as being so entirely wrong in his world, as he formulates it in the prologue (vv. 1–27). The evil, which this verse narrative targets so poignantly, is intimately tied in with life in a big city, Vienna, where people can find any kind of entertainment (v. 70), that is, especially, wine, foot-loose women, and good food (vv. 77–81), as long as one has enough money to pay for it (vv. 75–76). To underscore this critical point, the narrator specifically emphasizes that the entire group of revelers consists of wealthy citizens (v. 84), although later we recognize, at least indirectly, that some of them might just pretend to have much money (vv. 126–31). Although the entire group is only interested in

48 Albrecht Classen, “Wine, Drunkenness, Morality, and Satire in *Der Wiener Meerfahrt*,” to appear in *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*.

49 Wagner, “Die Lust an erzählter Gewalt” (see note 47), over-interprets the entire narrative when he claims: “Diese Gewaltgemeinschaft bildet sich im fließenden Übergang zwischen drei Stufen – erzählte Gewalt, virtuelle Gewalt und tatsächliche Gewalt – und ihr Inhalt changiert zwischen Pilgerfahrt, Kreuzzug und schließlich Bürgerkrieg” (39). There is no community bonded by a shared interest in violence; there is no indication whatsoever that the drunken men intend to go on a crusade; and the threatening behavior by the sober neighbors at the end cannot be identified as a ‘civil war’ at all.

enjoying their free time with each other, drinking wine and ordering good food, they quickly turn to the topic of pilgrimage and then, in their illusion, talk about a pilgrimage, as if they were honestly motivated by religious ideals – and this quite parallel to the ‘pilgrims’ in Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*.

Apparently, already at that time pilgrimage itself had turned into a commercial enterprise and probably served more to satisfy one’s curiosity about the foreign world than to aim for one’s soul’s salvation through the help of relics at special locations far away from home.⁵⁰ Not surprisingly, it only takes one suggestion by a rich citizen for all the drunken men immediately to agree to the plan to embark on that pilgrimage (vv. 182–86), which turns out, of course, as a pure fiction, although the events then almost result in the death of one of their friends.

Altogether, *Der Wiener Meerfahrt* thus emerges as a highly illustrative literary case of a drinking party involving a large group of wealthy urban citizens, who lose, however, their self-control and get entirely drunk. The poet apparently reflected on a rather common occurrence and allows us, through his satirical treatment, to gain insight into leisure time in a late medieval city where fellowship in a tavern could easily bring together representatives of various social classes. At the end, in their utter drunkenness, they all agree to go on a pilgrimage and thus commit the greatest foolishness, about which the sober neighbors at first laugh contemptuously, until they realize the bad outcome, with one of the revelers having been badly injured. Shame and utter repentance among the drinkers are the consequence, but only after they have sobered up three days later and realize what this partying at which they all enjoyed too much wine has done to their honor.⁵¹

Deep embarrassment sets in, especially when the injured neighbor raises hefty charges against them, which the narrator then formulates rather oddly: “Do hvb sich Krímhilden not” (629; Then the pain resulting from Kriemhild’s ac-

⁵⁰ See, for instance, *Unterwegs im Namen der Religion: Wege und Ziele in vergleichender Perspektive – das mittelalterliche Europa und Asien*, ed. Klaus Herbers and Hans Christian Lehner. Beiträge zur Hagiographie, 17 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2016).

⁵¹ Leif Ludwig Albertsen, “Die Moralphilosophie in der Wiener Meerfahrt,” *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 98 (1969): 64–80; Albrecht Classen, “Ein großes Gelage mit ernsthaften Folgen, erzählerisch reflektiert: Weinkonsum und Wirtshausszene in ‘Der Wiener Meerfahrt’,” *‘Tschuldigung...: Kuriose Miszellen. Andreas Meyer zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Dorett Elodie Werhahn-Piorkowski, Hendrik Baumbach, and Alexander Maul (Marburg: private printing, 2015), 7–10 (also available online at: <https://www.academia.edu/upgrade?feature=search&trigger=new-lft-nv&q=%E2%80%98Tschuldigung...%20Kuriose%20Miszellen.%20Andreas%20Meyer%20zum%2060.%20Geburtstag&ct=1>; last accessed on April 29, 2018; unfortunately, this now requires a payable upgrade).

tion set in), referring to the Middle High German heroic epic, *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200), where at the end all heroes, with the exception of the outsiders Dietrich and his liege man Hildebrand) succumb to death because of Kriemhild's unquenchable desire to avenge her husband Siegfried's murder at Hagen's hand.⁵² This comment would only make sense if it actually implied that the perpetrators actually felt deeply embarrassed and knew only too well that they have transgressed. Yet, their very ruefulness also indicates that the same disaster as in the *Nibelungenlied* will not strike them. After all, the *mære* is convincingly framed by an initial global *laudatio temporis acti* and the criticism of the current social and cultural conditions in Vienna, and, at the end, a sobering realization of how badly the consumption of alcohol had misled them all. There is, hence, room for improvement and reform. This thus also offers a good explanation for the poet's *nom de plume*, Der Freudenleere (He without joy), signaling his criticism of the bad misbehavior by the group of Viennese revelers.

Insofar as the core story about such a drinking party that results in an involuntary act of violence against one of the comatose drinking companions is also contained in the near contemporary *Renner* by Hugo von Trimberg (ca. 1270 – 1290),⁵³ we can assume that people were keenly aware of the issue of drunkenness at all levels of society. Hugo, however, situates the event somewhere in Bavaria, and not in Vienna, and the revelers quickly sober up as soon as they hear their poor fellow reveler, who has broken his arm and his leg, scream out loudly. Previous research has, as far as I can tell, entirely ignored these important textual parallels, but the more comments about drunkenness in medieval courtly literature we find, the more we can confirm the global relevance of this issue.

Heinrich Kaufringer's Treatment of Drunkenness

In a somewhat later verse narrative, which would have to be identified more as moral, ethical, or generally didactic instruction, the Landshut poet Heinrich Kaufringer (ca. 1400) examined in surprising detail and insightfulness the effect of

52 *Das Nibelungenlied: Mittelhochdeutsch / Neuhochdeutsch*. Nach der Handschrift B herausgegeben von Ursula Schulze. Ins Neuhochdeutsche übersetzt und kommentiert von Siegfried Grosse (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, [2010]). The poet concludes his account, reflecting on the profound grief which affects every one of the survivors in distant Burgundy, with the words: "das ist der Nibelunge nôt" (stanza 1376, v. 4).

53 Hugo von Trimberg, *Der Renner* (see note 3), vol. II, vv. 10250 – 82.

alcohol on an individual.⁵⁴ In his *mæren*, Kaufringer discusses, in a variety of contexts, fundamental legal, moral, ethical, and religious issues, emphasizing regularly the difference between human and divine justice, and between a strict human legal system and a more globally conceived concept of proper legal regulations. He also commented on cowardly husbands (no. 6); he ridicules foolish monks who cannot sustain the church law of obedience (no. 12), and he deeply questions the validity of human laws, in contrast to those issued by God (no. 14). Elsewhere, a pious miller woman stands in for the most admirable individual, even within a village community (no. 17). Not surprisingly, then, he also examined, in the last text (no. 12; “The Twelve Properties of Wine”), the impact of wine and alcoholism on human society at large, adding a significant commentary based on a detailed analysis of the consequence of increasing amounts of wine consumed by an individual.

Kaufringer begins with general comments on the wondrous properties of stones, roots (plants), and words, as the past masters have taught.⁵⁵ The effects of wine, however, supersede everything because of its enormous inner strength (“kraft,” v. 10). However, instead of discussing different types of wine, such as made from various grapes, the narrator only refers to the number of cups the drinker consumes because the alcohol is accumulating in his body. This is manifested in the increase in the erubescence of his cheeks (v. 27), for instance, or in

54 Marga Stede, *Schreiben in der Krise: die Texte des Heinrich Kaufringer*. Literatur, Imagination, Realität, 5 (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 1993); Albrecht Classen, *Love, Life, and Lust in Heinrich Kaufringer's Verse Narratives*. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 467. MRTS Texts for Teaching, 9 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2014). The bibliography lists all the relevant studies. See now Coralie Rippl, “Geld und âventiure: narrative Aspekte der Zeit-Raum-Erfahrung bei Heinrich Kaufringer,” *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 134 (2012): 540–69; eadem, *Erzählen als Argumentationsspiel: Heinrich Kaufringers Fallkonstruktionen zwischen Rhetorik, Recht und literarischer Stofftradition*. Bibliotheca Germanica, 61 (Tübingen: Francke, 2014). Rippl, however, focuses mostly on rhetorical and stylistic aspects. Stede views Kaufringer's texts mostly as reflections of an imminent crisis affecting all of society, which seems to amount to an exaggeration. Michaela Willers, *Heinrich Kaufringer als Märenautor: Das Oeuvre des cgm 270* (Berlin: Logos Verlag, 2002), carries out a strictly structuralist analysis that does not pertain to our concerns here. For the historical-critical edition, see Heinrich Kaufringer, *Werke*, ed. Paul Sappeler. Vol. I: *Text* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1972); for an English translation, see my *Love, Life, and Lust in Heinrich Kaufringer's Verse Narratives* (above).

55 The poet refers to the various magical arts and natural sciences, such as lapidary science, as commonly practiced in the late Middle Ages. See my introduction and the contributions to *Magic and Magicians in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Time: The Occult in Pre-Modern Sciences, Medicine, Literature, Religion, and Astrology*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 20 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017).

his perceived learning and poetic skills which he suddenly thinks outshine those of the greatest poets of the past, such as Frauenlob, Wolfram von Eschenbach, and Gottfried von Strassburg (vv. 35–38).

This then continues and concludes with the twelfth cup of wine, upon which the inn-keeper and his servants have to carry the drunken man to his room and place him in his bed (vv. 130–32). Altogether, the power of wine is identified in a satirical fashion as superior to that of roots and stones (v. 135) because the alcohol transforms the drinker and makes him believe all kinds of fanciful matter. Kaufringer was, of course, learned enough to incorporate those references to previous medieval poets and to occult sciences in order to ridicule excessive drinking, which also leads the foolish man to lose his ability to speak, this after the tenth cup of wine (vv. 110–14).

While the poet otherwise focuses on rather ponderous issues, addressing fundamental human conflicts, marital problems, cowardice, intelligent communication, honorable and rational behavior, moral and ethical concerns, the seven cardinal sins, or the disagreements between a Jew and a Christian concerning their respective faith, here the issue rests on nothing but excessive drinking of wine and the workings of the alcohol as it creates illusions and make the individual look and speak foolishly. Kaufringer was neither the first nor the last to thematize wine and to criticize its consumption, especially when in excess, but it deserves mention that the inclusion of this verse narrative into his corpus of tales underscores the relevance of the topic for the learned, educated audience, probably situated in an urban setting.

“Von den großen truncken”

In most of the various miscellany manuscripts compiled in the late Middle Ages, many different authors addressed the wide gamut of social, ethical, moral, and religious issues relevant at their times, and hence also drunkenness. Many times we find images of apes getting wine from a barrel and then drinking it, and then even a variety of drinking vessels decorated with engraved images of drunken monkeys (*babewyn* or *babeuenny*) or birds, such as the “Monkey cup” made in the Low Countries for the Burgundian court around the middle of the fifteenth century, now held by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cloisters Collection, New York.⁵⁶ In “Von den großen truncken” (Codex Karlsruhe 408, ca. late four-

⁵⁶ Sarah Westphal, *Textual Poetics of German Manuscripts, 1300–1500*. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 2003); for poetry collections, cf.

teenth century; Of the Great Drunken People),⁵⁷ we also come across a detailed description of the specific properties of wine, which provides inspiration (“Du geist vns hohen mut,” v. 29; you give us high spirit), courage (“Du magst kvn den zagen,” v. 30; you make the coward to a brave person), and even wisdom (“Der wirt weis vnd karck,” v. 31; he becomes wise and smart). The drinker does not use a cup or a glass, but takes a whole tankard and chugs down the wine without any concerns or inhibition. After all, as he states then, drinking wine would offer him more entertainment and pleasure than any other courtly activity, such as fighting in a tournament (v. 50), dancing, or chatting at court (v. 51), and would please him more than any valuable cloth or any object out of silver and gold (vv. 52–54). Drawing from the imagery normally reserved for courtly love discourse, he insists that he would be more inclined to enjoy his wine than to search for love; nothing would ever be able to separate him from his wine (vv. 57–60). No musical entertainment would be tantamount to the joys to be gained from wine (v. 64).

Once having taken the next gulp, he turns away every natural creature as being subordinate to wine as the source of the highest degree of happiness (vv. 70–74). These comparisons continue to dominate the verse narrative, and in this process the poet outlines increasingly the entire gamut of various types of entertainment and leisure activities one might think of at court, including wooing women (vv. 87–90) or hunting animals (vv. 116–19). The close bondage between himself and wine is virtually described in the terms of courtly love, with the drinker being the loyal servant of wine who would never separate from its master: “Beyde, ich vnd der wein, / Mussen ymmer gesamet sein. / Mir ist an im wol gelungen, / Er hot mich des beczwugen, / daz ich ye det sein gebot” (vv. 136–40; Both I and the wine will always have to stick together. I have found my good fortune with it. It has gained mastership over me, and I carry out its commands).

also Manfred Zimmermann, *Die Sterzinger Miszellen-Handschrift: kommentierte Edition der deutschen Dichtungen* (Innsbruck: Institut für Germanistik der Universität, 1980). For verse narratives, see the contributions to *Die Kunst der “brevitas”: kleine literarische Formen des deutschsprachigen Mittelalters: Rostocker Kolloquium 2014*, ed. Franz-Josef-Holznagel and Jan Cölln. *Wolfram-Studien*, 24 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2017); for a discussion of relevant poems and texts by Chaucer and Deschamps, as well as manuscript illustrations and drinking vessels, see Laura Kendrick, “Disfigured Drunkenness in Chaucer, Deschamps, and Medieval Culture” (see note 30).

57 *Codex Karlsruhe 408*, ed. Ursula Schmid. *Deutsche Sammelhandschriften des späten Mittelalters*. *Bibliotheca Germanica*, 16 (Bern and Munich: Francke Verlag, 1974).

Most importantly, wine conveys courtly joy (vv. 148–49), and well-mannered people should always strive toward the goal of gaining joy: “Wir sullen nach freuden ringen” (v. 145; we should strive for joys), which amounts to an egregious travesty of all traditional courtly values commonly expressed with the term “joie.”⁵⁸ The drinker also reflects on his own unquenchable thirst and his great pride in being so strong that he can keep imbibing ever more wine. At the end, however, he feels lonely and looks for a companion who could share the wine with him because even the best drink would not compensate for loneliness (vv. 179–83).

All this, however, ultimately proves to be nothing but a facetious discussion of exorbitant drinking habits since the narrative concludes with the protagonist’s prayer to God, appealing to Him to save his soul in the afterlife. The poet pursues a traditional strategy of presenting an extreme case of an addict who cannot control his wine consumption and whose bragging is supposed to attract nothing but laughter because of his ridiculous behavior. Altogether, here we recognize, in a subtle but clearly noticeable manner, a literary parody of traditional courtly entertainment, pleasures, and leisure activities, which are all replaced here by incessant drinking. If we consider the many other topics covered by the other verse narratives in this miscellany manuscript, we realize how much the discussion of wine consumption serves as a negative foil to the basic aspects of courtly lifestyle. The thematic range extends from religious issues to political and ethical problems, from a reflection of the various social classes to moral and philosophical questions (fable narratives). The collector also included *mæren* dealing with gluttony, table manners, pilgrimage, attractive women, loyalty and disloyalty, proper behavior, adultery, and, at the end, the creation of people, and the power of prayer.

Despite all alleged praise of the impressive properties of wine, as we learn in a second verse narrative contained in this codex, “Von der trunckenheit” (552–53; Of Drunkenness), the alcohol creates only illusions and makes the drinkers into utter fools: “Das wir nicht recht wißen, / Wo wir hin gesiczen” (vv. 70–71; so that we do not really know where we sit down). Drunkenness makes bold those who always tend to be shy and fearful, as the alcohol makes them suddenly brag about the greatest heroic deeds (vv. 5–8). The alcohol deceives, as the poet insists, and transforms people into fools who cry senselessly and pretend confessing their sins (vv. 22–25), or it makes some individuals

58 Siegfried Christoph, “The Language and Culture of Joy,” *Words of Love and Love of Words in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 347 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008), 319–33.

burst out in pointless cussing and cursing (vv. 27–30). As the poet unmistakably indicates, gluttony, whether in food or in drink, deserves severe criticism because it undermines the standard values of courtly and urban society.⁵⁹

Oswald von Wolkenstein (1376/77–1445)

In a very similar vein, the today truly famous Tyrolean poet Oswald von Wolkenstein, who has gained so much traction in recent research because of his idiosyncratic travel songs, autobiographical songs, prison songs, marital songs, etc., and because we know so much about him in biographical terms, also addressed drunkenness and outlines in his song “Und swig ich nu die lenge zwar” (Kl. 117; If I stay quiet any longer) the individual stages of getting drunk after ever more cups of wine. He offers a facetious, and yet also didactic commentary, ridiculing the revelers who cannot contain themselves and make fools of themselves through their silly or even outrageous behavior as a result of their heavy consumption of alcohol. In a dramatic, rapid development the song illustrates dramatically what the wine does to the drinkers and how they lose their mind. Ultimately, however, Oswald concludes: “Betracht ain jeder mensch genau, / wie zierlich ist ain stät vernunft durch man und frau” (vv. 58–59; Every person should pay close attention to how marvelous it is for a man or a woman to command a steady mind/reason).⁶⁰

We do not need to go into further details here because the poet basically reiterates what other critics had already voiced before him; so suffice it to observe that the theme of excessive alcohol consumption appears to have been on the mind of many people throughout the late Middle Ages and beyond. Both poetic expressions and dramatic performance, both didactic formulations and narrative reflections indicate that the issue of excessive drinking of alcohol was regarded

⁵⁹ Leander Petzoldt, “Gula et ebrietas: Gluttony and Drunkenness in Ecclesiastical Criticism in the Waning Middle Ages and Early Modern Times,” *Food and Celebration: From Fasting to Feasting: Proceedings of the 13th Conference of the International Commission for Ethnological Food Research, Ljubljana, Preddvor, and Piran, Slovenia, June 5–11, 2000*, ed. Patricia Lysaght (Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, ZRC SAZU; Dublin: Department of Irish Folklore, University College, 2002), 135–47.

⁶⁰ *Die Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein*, ed. Karl Kurt Klein. 4., grundlegend neu bearbeitete Auflage von Burghart Wachinger. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 55 (1962; 1987; Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015). See now the contributions to *Oswald von Wolkenstein: Leben – Werk – Rezeption*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Margarete Springeth (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011). The issue of social misbehavior – excessive drinking – however, is not addressed here specifically, apart from the study by Ulrich Müller, “Die Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein mit erotischer Thematik und das Problem der (auto)biographischen Interpretation” (213–23).

with extensive criticism and hence as a danger for the community at large because it endangered the premises of courtly culture at large. This concern continued to be addressed far into the sixteenth century, such as by Martin Luther, Hans Sachs, and Sebastian Franck, but this would be the topic for another paper.

Conclusion

Wherever we look, late medieval poets consistently condemned the excessive consumption of wine and outlined its negative consequences for an individual's behavior, attitude, perception, and performance in public. However, in all three cases we observe a clear distinction between occasional drinkers and heavy drinkers since the focus rests only on the latter. The satire is consistently aimed at the latter, whereas wine itself is not at all described as evil or condemnable. As the poet of *Der Wiener Meerfahrt* indicated, drinking in groups as a standard form of public entertainment, and this for many hours, from the afternoon until the next morning, can have catastrophic consequences, although it appeared to have been a normal procedure at that time and under the circumstances as outlined in the story.

Each time when the focus turns to drunkenness, the poet notes that drinking is replacing traditional forms of courtly behavior and entertainment. Both tournaments and dancing, both singing and love wooing are abandoned because alcohol confuses the mind and incapacitates the members of the drinking party to such an extent that they are no longer in control of themselves. In his *Narrenschiff* (1494), the famous Humanist Sebastian Brant also included references to drunkards who fail to observe the standard rules of courtly behavior and yell and shout uncontrollably. Deeply irritated about this excess and transgression, the poet identifies those intoxicated by too much wine as unworthy of polite and well educated society.⁶¹

While courtly poets treated this topic, drunkenness, with great care, trying commonly to hide the certain occurrence of losing one's self-control as a result of heavy intake of alcohol, late medieval German and other authors of verse narratives abandoned this hesitation and addressed the issue with full force, drawing strongly on irony and also satire, such as the *Sermon joyeux de saint raisin*

⁶¹ Sebastian Brant, *Das Narrenschiff*, ed. Manfred Lemmer. 3rd rev. ed. Neudrucke deutscher Literaturwerke, Neue Folge, 5 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1986), "Von disches vnzucht," vv. 104–17.

(ca. 1538).⁶² This, in turn, allows us to gain solid insight, at least indirectly, into major forms of entertainment, which is here regularly abandoned in favor of heavy drinking. We may thus conclude that the late medieval poets regarded the replacement of traditional pleasure and leisure activities (tournaments, dancing, music playing, etc.) with heavy drinking as a catastrophic development, but they only had satire available as a strategic tool to combat this decline in social *mores*. If we consider subsequent satirical literature from the sixteenth century, we would gain quick confirmation that the topic of excessive drinking of wine continued to be discussed, especially in the genre of *Schwänke* (jest narratives), such as in *Till Eulenspiegel*. Granted, there we come across only fleeting references to this problem, such as when we hear of a big party after a child's baptism (no. 1), of a wager involving a barrel of beer (no. 12), or priests who are more committed to heavy drinking than to giving sermons (no. 31), but even in this context the narrator openly laughs about and ridicules those who cannot control their alcohol consumption and make fools out of themselves. After all, since biblical times, and until today, the enjoyment of alcohol has never abated and continues, when consumed in excess, to threaten the well-being of society, as the modern epidemic of opioid use tragically signals.⁶³

62 Hasso Spode, *Alkohol und Zivilisation: Berauschung, Ernüchterung und Tischsitten in Deutschland bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Tara-Verlag Hensel, 1991); Reinhold, Kaiser, together with Marie-Thérèse Kaiser-Guyot, *Trunkenheit und Gewalt im Mittelalter* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2002); Hanneke Wilson, *Wine & Words in Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (London: Duckworth, 2003); John L Varriano, *Wine: A Cultural History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010); for general reflections on this issue, see Jan Dietrich Reinhardt, *Alkohol und soziale Kontrolle: Gedanken zu einer Soziologie des Alkoholismus*. Bibliotheca academica / Reihe Soziologie, 3 (Würzburg: Ergon-Verlag, 2005); as to the *Sermon*, see Anonymous, "Sermon joyeux de saint Raisin," *Recueil de Sermons Joyeux*, ed. Jelle Koopmans (Geneva: Droz, 1988), 529–42. I am obliged to Sharon King for this reference.

63 *Das kurzweilige Lesen von Til Eulenspiegel*, ed. Wolfgang Lindow (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam Jun., 1978); cf. Gregory Austin, "Die europäische Drogenkrise des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts," *Rausch und Realität: Drogen im Kulturvergleich*, ed. Gisela Völger, together with Karin von Welck and Aldo Legnaro. Ethnologica 9.1 (Cologne: Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, 1981), 64–72; Hannes Kästner, "Der Irrgänger im Schwarzwald: Jörg Wickrams Dialog 'Von der Trunkenheit' und die literarische Anti-Alkoholismus-Kampagne im 16. Jahrhundert," *Literatur und Kultur im deutschen Südwesten zwischen Renaissance und und Aufklärung. Neue Studien*, Walter E. Schäfter zum 65. Geburtstag gewidmet, ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann. Chloe, 22 (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Editions Rodopi, 1995), 75–102; Albrecht Classen, *Deutsche Schwankliteratur des 16. Jahrhunderts: Studien zu Martin Montanus, Hans Wilhelm Kirchhof und Michael Lindener*. Koblenz-Landauer Studien zu Geistes-, Kultur- und Bildungswissenschaften, 4 (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2009), 88–90, et passim.

The famous cobbler poet Hans Sachs from Nuremberg 1494–1576) also mentions drunkenness many times in his poems and plays, such as when he underscores, in his “Summa all meiner Gedicht vom 1514. Jahr an bis ins 1507. Jahr,” his own virtuosity at the end of his years as an apprentice. After five years of wandering throughout southern Germany and learning from the various masters, he finally settled in Nuremberg, where he resolutely rejected all vices, including gambling, drinking, and fooling around with women, and he then turned exclusively to the art of composing mastersongs.⁶⁴

In his poem “Dreyerley scheden der trunckenheytt” (December 28, 1540), Sachs has his dialogue partner identify the triple danger of excessive consumption of wine: drunkenness undermines the physical and mental health; it destroys one’s public reputation because a drunkard would constantly insult people for no reason and act most foolishly; and it robs the drinker of all of his or her properties and money. Both biblical (Noah, Lot, Holofernes) and ancient classical examples (Alexander the Great) illustrate, as the speaker emphasizes, why it would be most important to avoid drunkenness and alcohol addiction. Already the sages from old had taught to avoid drunkenness because it would make the individual into a fool and deprive him or her of his/her entire wealth.⁶⁵

In essence, the negative comments about the dangers of excessive consumption of wine prove to be very similar throughout the centuries and across the various literary genres. Poets regularly observed the need to address wine drinking as a vice and condemned its devastating consequences for body and mind, for the individual’s social standing, physical being, financial status, and honor and reputation. Intriguingly, this condemnation of heavy drinking continued throughout the centuries and has not lost any of its significance even today. But it was always only one side of a coin because, as we have also observed, medical, philosophical, and even theological voices held a high opinion of wine, though probably only when consumed in moderation.

Studying the issue of excessive drinking and resulting drunkenness sheds important light on the ordinary situation in the pre-modern world as reflected in literary documents, for instance, but also in art works, where we see, at times, scenes of revelers who have to vomit due to their heavy consumption of alcohol, or simply have fallen into a coma, such as in famous Pieter Bruegel

⁶⁴ *Hans Sachsens Gedichte*, ed. Paul Merker and Reinhard Buchwald (Leipzig: Insel, 1920), 286. See also the edition by Friedrich Furchaus (1820), online now at: <https://books.google.de/books?id=zbJbAAAAcAAJ> (last accessed on April 29, 2018).

⁶⁵ *Hans Sachs*, ed. Adelbert von Keller, vol. 3. Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins, CIV (Tübingen: Litterarischer Verein, 1870), 523–26; online at: <https://books.google.de/books?id=khdVAAAAcAAJ> (last accessed on April 29, 2018).



Fig. 1: Bruegel the Elder's "The Wine of Saint Martin's Day" (ca. 1565–1568)

the Elder's "The Wine of Saint Martin's Day" (ca. 1565–1568) (Fig. 1). The criticism voiced, however, rarely came from a 'Puritan' or extremely moralizing perspective, as it often appears that the poetic critics were enjoying drinking themselves, as is the case in the texts by Eustache Deschamps (ca. 1346–1406/1407) and relied heavily on satire and witticism to entertain their audiences with reflections on all of their own weaknesses.⁶⁶ There is always laughter, mockery, contempt, ridicule, but also empathy, sympathy, and criticism involved. Oddly, however, the more those moral, didactic, and literary critics voiced their opposition to excessive drinking, the more the custom seems to have spread, as is wonderfully and joyfully illustrated in the fifteenth-century frescoes contained in the wine and cloth cellar of the Wismar city hall (see Fig. 2). We could easily conclude, hence, that the adaptation of the old proverb works very well in this context: tell me what and how much you drink, and I will tell you who you are.

⁶⁶ For online reproductions, see http://www.pieter-bruegel.co.uk/gallery/pages/st_martin.htm; or https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Wine_of_Saint_Martin%27s_Day#/media/File:Bruegelsanmartin.jpg (last accessed on Dec. 1, 2018). See also the valuable discussion by Laura Kendrick, "Disfigured Drunkenness in Chaucer, Deschamps, and Medieval Culture" (see note 30). Her comments on these two poets are particularly valuable regarding the evaluation of wine and the consumption of alcohol at court and in the urban world.



Fig. 2: Fresco in the Wismar (Germany) wine cellar below the city hall, fifteenth century

Daniel F. Pigg

William Langland's Attitude Toward Play, Leisure, and Pastime: A Realignment of Priorities in Post-Plague England

Introduction

When the topics of play, leisure, pastime, and pleasure arise in the content of conversations about William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, a fourteenth-century Middle English poem written in multiple versions from the 1360s to 1390s, the immediate thought is that the poem and its writer present a dark view relative to these topics.¹ In fact, these topics are not ones that most readers will readily call to mind with thinking about the poem. Written in the wake of the Black Death (ca. 1348–1351), of a challenging relationship between Parliament and Richard II, of the Peasants' Revolt, and of changing economic fortunes of the peasant class,² *Piers Plowman* projects a vision of a world at the point of an apocalypse. In fact, one scholar of the poem labeled the poem a “fourteenth-century apocalypse.”³ How could joy, pleasure, games, travel, song, dance, hunting, and reading be accommodated in that worldview? In the Prologue to all versions of the poem (A, B, C, and Z), readers are met with comments about those who waste what others provide through their labor – a labor that is seldom interrupted by anything resembling play or leisure. Medieval entertainment is normally identified with music provided by minstrels, but in Langland's poem, such merriment is seen in terms of juggling – a game for personal gain, using the image of

1 All quotations from *Piers Plowman* are to the B text unless noted otherwise. See *Piers Plowman: The B Version*, ed. George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1988). All translations from the Middle English text are my own. This essay, while primarily based on the B text, does include some references to A and C text traditions and those are noted separately.

2 For a discussion of *Piers Plowman* and the Peasants' Revolt, see Anne Hudson, “Piers Plowman and the Peasants' Revolt: A Problem Revisited,” *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 8 (1995): 85–106. See also Steven Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*, *The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), particularly pages 102–39.

3 Morton Bloomfield, *Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-Century Apocalypse* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1961).

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a behavior associated with the world of game and play. That those who juggle are called the children of Judas is not to be missed. Games often lead to excess and the loss of perspective for those who frequent taverns. Gluttony – the sin of conspicuous consumption – is set against a world where poverty reigns in the larger society.

On the surface, the collage of images of play, gaming, leisure, and pleasure in the midst the manorial village life of business and worthy agricultural labor seems out of balance. Langland wants to recover that balance. On Langland's expanded "fair feeld" that exists between his symbolic domains of heaven and hell, the very drama of life is played out as if it were a later morality play such as *Mankynde* (ca. 1470) or *The Castle of Perseverance* (first quarter of the fifteenth century). From the opening of the poem where Will the Dreamer clothed himself in a "shrou[d] as I a sheep were; / In habite as a hermite, vnholly of werkes" (Prol. 2–3; robed as if I were a sheep; In the habit of a hermit, unholy of works), he sets up a kind of poetics of difference. He will condemn hermits in lines 28–29 in this opening vision for their failure to practice their religious devotions and instead engage in unnecessary travel and indulgence in bodily delights.

Apparently their play within life is not acceptable. Why would Langland the poet and Will the Dreamer choose to connect themselves with hermits and then to condemn them so quickly? The simple answer might be that Langland brings images and concepts together in order to deconstruct them through language play and association, but it is also true that the Langlandian method will embrace contradiction in order to establish more subtle truths that the poet believes are necessary in the post-Plague world. The poet juxtaposes in the same way minstrels who "murþes to make" (Prol. 33; make mirth) against those whose gain is not acceptable. In creating this collage, the poet draws more than subtle distinctions throughout his poem. In fact, the Langlandian poetics is built upon establishing distinctions, whether readers are considering his ideas of minstrels, the Palmer versus Piers as a pilgrim guide, the meaning of Dowel, Dobet and Dobest, the thoughts on the Trinity, or the identify of various characters.

What often emerges for readers is a quick characterization of Langland's vision involving play, leisure, and merriment that may miss the point in a poem where images of these activities are apparent. Instead, this essay asserts that Langland's attitude toward these topics actually suggests the subtle and not-so-subtle ambiguity that exists between play that benefits society and play that does not. In fact, what emerges is what level of play and engagement benefits the larger social body. Rightly understood, Langland's *Piers Plowman* is about a re-visioning of the world, and for Langland, part of the imagining involves more helpful play and leisure. In essence, Langland through the narrator

and others identifies behaviors that support the social order and those that are destructive.

What seems clear is that the poem deals with the concept of play and leisure on at least two different levels. First, play is one aspect that must be workable for the social contract, and second there is the notion that the play of language itself – human language in particular – is important for working out meaning. Langland's poem is rooted in ambiguity about the world of language, game, and play.⁴ What the poem asserts is that right play, right language, and appropriate leisure activities are part of a cosmological design for a poet who assumes that “treuthe” – a word associated not only with truthfulness in word and deed, but also rooted in the social stability of the feudal system – is paramount and second only to the ability to learn to love.⁵

I. Developing a Description of Work and Play

The Prologue to the poem establishes what seems to be a doctrinaire stance with regard to work versus play. In Langland's vision of the landscape, the Prologue establishes the geographical range with the “tour,” “dungeon,” and “fair feeld ful of folk” (fair field filled with folk). Robert Adams has observed that “these edifices [the tower and dungeon] are not the only realities. They are the final ones – the destination of souls, not of societies.”⁶ It is actually, however, the “fair feeld ful of folk” on which the struggle between good versus evil, production versus consumption, and work against false play begins. The poet describes his ideological plane:

A fair feeld of folk fond I per bitwene
Of all manere of men, þe meene and þe riche,
Werchyng and wandryng as þe world askep,
Some putt hem to plough, pleiden ful selde,

4 Mary Clemente Davlin, *A Game of Heuene*. *Piers Plowman Studies*, 6 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989). Davlin's study is one of the most important pieces of scholarship on the aspect of linguistic games in the poem.

5 John A. Alford, “The Design of the Poem,” *A Companion to Piers Plowman*, ed. John A. Alford (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 29–65. See also Priscilla Martin, “*Piers Plowman*: Indirect Relations and the Record of Truth,” *Suche Werkis to Werche: Essays on Piers Plowman in Honor of David C. Fowler*, ed. Mícheál F. Vaughan. *Medieval Texts and Studies*, 15 (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1993), 169–90.

6 Robert Adams, “Langland's Theology,” *A Companion to Piers Plowman*, ed. John A. Alford (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 87–114.

In setting and sowyne swonken ful harde;
 Wonnen þat [pise] wastours with glotyne destuyeth. (Prol. 17–22)

[A fair field of people I found there between
 Of all manner of men, the poor and the rich,
 Working and roaming about as the world asks,
 Some put themselves to the plow, played very seldom,
 In setting and sewing worked very hard;
 They won what these wasters destroy with gluttony.]

As the description continues, Will the Dreamer notes that some follow the practices that their social class and vocational calling expect.

Perhaps more challenging, however, is the following description that opens up the challenge of reading the traditional landscape in terms of human behavior:

And somme murþes to make as Mynstralles konne,
 And geten gold with hire glee [gilt]less, I leeue.
 As laperes and langeleres, Judas children,
 [Fonden] hem fantasies and fooles hem makeþ,
 And han wit at will to werken if [hem liste].
 That Paul precheþ of hem I [dar] nat preue it here;
Qui loquitur turpiloquium is luciferes hyne. (Prol. 33–39)

[And some to make mirth as minstrels can,
 And get gold for their glee guiltless I think.
 But Jokers and Jangelers (word jugglers), Judas' children,
 Develop for themselves fantasies and make fools of themselves,
 And have wits at will to work if they wanted to.
 That Paul preaches of them I dare not prove it here;
 Who speaks filthy language is Lucifer's henchmen.]

Throughout *Piers Plowman*, minstrels have a prominent place, and as William Elford Rogers has observed, minstrels are treated in a variety of ways in the poem. With the later representation of *Activ Life* (Haukyn), minstrels are “ambiguous,” and in the autobiographical statement – a C text addition as well as comments about God’s minstrels – Langland himself identifies as a minstrel.⁷ Readers should note that they gain their wealth innocently. As Albrecht Classen observes in the introductory essay in this volume, the tumbler – a person whose activity is associated with the minstrel – in various texts in the medieval

7 William Elford Rogers, *Interpretation in Piers Plowman* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2002), 38–39; F. R. H. Du Boulay, *The England of Piers Plowman: William Langland and His Vision of The Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991), 33–34.

French tradition is engaged in both liturgical and extra-liturgical celebrations that relate to larger matters of spirituality.⁸ The vocations of the minstrel and the tumbler or dancer facilitate the world of play – the world of music and verse that is never intended to deceive. Mirth represents a kind of *jouissance* that lifts the spirit. That Langland describes the vocation as worthy of financial support is highly significant in a passage that is oriented toward work and fixed behaviors of honor. Andrew Galloway observes that the term “minstrel” can “cover all manner of entertainers, from actors to jugglers, drummers, acrobats, harpers, and trumpeters.”⁹ That Langland places them in this particular moment should not come as a surprise. As Paul B. Newman notes, minstrels were most often from the “commoners” and they were sometimes employed for singular and long-term employment by the noble classes to provide music. While they may have used various instruments in their work such as tabors and bagpipes, singing was the most common behavior.¹⁰ William Elford Rogers notes that minstrels did not easily fit into the “traditional three estates,” but what is also clear is that when a poet whose razor-sharp observations about society do not condemn them but holds them “guiltless,” it is significant.¹¹ Records also indicate that many minstrels provided education to the children of nobles,¹² but the focus here seems to be on what they provide in the social contract among those who work and pray. George Shuffelton suggests that minstrels were indeed important to Langland and that he preserved an idea of their usefulness in the social order.¹³

The minstrels, however, are contrasted with those who exploit the power of the word. They are made more apparent with reference to “Iaperes and langleleres,” who are described as “Judas children,” an image that suggests abuse at the very level of language itself. What, of course, is interesting is that their activity is not regarded as work, a clear contrast to that of the minstrels. Andrew Galloway notes that this distinction among the various groups noted in the passage puts Langland at odds with more conservative and traditional associations in-

⁸ See also further comments relative to tumblers in the introductory essay to this collection by Albrecht Classen.

⁹ Andrew Galloway, *The Penn Commentary on Piers Plowman* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 1:67.

¹⁰ Paul B. Newman, *Daily Life in the Middle Ages* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2001), 181–82.

¹¹ Rogers, *Interpretation in Piers Plowman* (see note 7), 38–39.

¹² Paul B. Newman, *Growing Up in the Middle Ages* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2007), 229.

¹³ George Shuffelton, “Is There a Minstrel in the House: Domestic Entertainment in Late Medieval England,” *Philological Quarterly* 87:1–2 (2008): 51–76.

cluding those who called themselves Lollards.¹⁴ Their “fantasies” may likely reference various kinds of ribaldry and the literary genre of the fabliau, and the intent is an ungracious depiction of life, and while humorous, is material for which Chaucer repents in his *Retraction*, whether we take the point seriously or not.¹⁵

As the scene on the “fair feeld” continues to unfold, Will the Dreamer imagines another kind of pastime that many engage in for a less than honorable intent: pilgrimage and story-telling. Pilgrims and professional tour guides for pilgrims on their way to Rome and to the shrine of St. James tell “many wise tales, / And hadde leue to lyen al hire lif after (Prol.48–49; many wise tales, and had leave to lie all their lives afterwards). Pilgrimage itself has a rather ambiguous status in *Piers Plowman*, and here it is turned into the cause of false speech. It may indeed provide some pleasure in leisure, but its intention is to misrepresent reality. Readers have only to think about collections of stories such as Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* that certainly postdate Langland’s observation to be the point of reference here, but even in Chaucer’s work, the “Parson’s Prologue” seems to dismiss the importance of such an activity of tale telling itself. There are many pilgrimage narratives in various vernacular languages of the Middle Ages. What then seems to have been the problem with tale-telling and pilgrimage story? Certainly the latter must have been helpful to those involved in the traditions of lay piety.

As the scene continues to unfold, with comments about hermits, friars, and pardoners, there is less attention to aspects of leisure and play, but instead, more visibility is given to the kinds of false play whereby those in various vocations use the tool of their religious offices to deceive others. Some of this scene may certainly relate to the changing demographics of Langland’s world of the late Middle Ages in post-Plague England, but what does seem most apparent is that a contrast is being drawn between genuinely helpful behaviors on the “fair feeld” and those that are not. No doubt, Langland could be labeled a social conservative in the sense of preserving traditional social structures of feudalism, but that he accords minstrels a special place of acceptance. A society on the brink of chaos – at least as Langland understands it – still needs those who lift the spirits of all people. That this suggestion is part of the tradition may surprise many readers of this poem.

14 Galloway, *The Penn Commentary on Piers Plowman* (see note 9), 1:67–68.

15 Galloway, *The Penn Commentary on Piers Plowman* (see note 9), 1:72.

II. Assessing the Fair Field to Determine Conspicuous Consumption as Non-Respectful Game

After the Prologue, the Dreamer confronts one of the poem's major interpreters of phenomena in the world. Lady Holy Church is that specific interpreter. In her characteristic way of playing with language and establishing her own circularity of teaching, Lady Holy Church states: "Whan alle tresors arn tried treupe is þe beste" (1.85; When all treasures are tried, Truth is the best). Given the elliptical and punning nature of her discourse, Lady Holy Church establishes not only the sheer pleasure of language, but also the very internal means to enclose and disclose meaning for Will the Dreamer. Using the methods of the Church Fathers and following a recursive strategy, she plays a kind of verbal game of which Langland approves as it teases out meaning. Mary Clemente Davlin asks the question, "Why begin a long narrative with such a puzzle? Why fling down such a challenge before the reader? For one thing, the style of Holy Church reflects the best and the most difficult aims of what she personifies: an attempt to express faith and the wisdom of love though they can perhaps barely be communicated in words at all, and then only by formula, implication, analogy, antithesis, irony, or figure."¹⁶ For Holy Church, language itself is rooted in mystery and game – puzzle – though not the kinds of manipulative language games that readers will meet with in the section presenting Lady Meed in Passus 2 through 4.

The marriage of Lady Meed to False – without question about extending the corruption of the world to the king's court through money/false payments – must be decided by the king, but on the way those who accompany the potential marriage pair are scattered. The various personified sins take up residence so as not to be taken into custody in the halls of justice. There is an intriguing passage that describes how falsehood takes residence with the friars. Guile takes up connections with merchants, and they robe him as an apprentice. Liar establishes connections with the pardoners, and then doctors and apothecaries take him in. Most intriguing are these words: "A[c] Mynstrales and Messagers mette with hym ones / And [wip]helden hym an half yeer and elleuene dayes" (2.230–31; But minstrels and messengers met with him once and held him with them a half year and eleven days). In one sense this notation takes readers back to the Prologue, but rather than seeing minstrels as innocent in their songs, it sug-

16 Davlin, *A Game of Heuene: Word Play and the Meaning of Piers Plowman B* (see note 4), 28.

gests rather the word jugglers – those who play games with language for their economic benefit rather than for the benefit of community or lifting the spirits for the moment – destroy right language. Almost as soon as Liar takes up residence with them, there is a quick movement to the friars, thus setting up the antifraternal qualities of the poem.¹⁷ This trip to Westminster presents a fiction of origins of how various professions denature language itself through their own false games. From another standpoint, this journey sets up the Langlandian method which often serves to examine issues below the surface. Such a practice moves to the atomic level in the confessions of the Seven Deadly Sins following the sermon of Reason in Passus 5.

In many ways, the dichotomy of the “fair feeld” continues into the confessions of the Seven Deadly Sins with even more penetrating images. In essence, Langland is looking at how sin permeates the social fabric through behavior. That will allow him to understand how society lingers on the brink of disaster in his apocalyptic imaginings. James Simpson has noted that for the confessions of Pride, Envy, Covetousness, Lechery, Wrath, Avarice, and Sloth, readers can easily find the materials presented in typical confessional manuals of the period.¹⁸ The confessional scenes of the Seven Deadly Sins move to another level of analysis whereby the nature of behavior is critiqued.

Here Langland’s focus is not on the individual, but on the motivational forces at work in people to bring about various kinds of social corruption. Of the portraits of the Seven Deadly Sins, Gluttony is the most realistic. As James Brosamer notes, “he is far less of a personified abstraction than others.”¹⁹ He is a “glutton, a certain man who gluts.”²⁰ Here the dreamer changes his discursive modes from telling how an actual sin works within the body politic; instead, Langland presents Gluttony as “acting out.” He is on his way to church to make his confession and to hear mass. Langland places Gluttony in the tavern as he is frequently depicted in artistic media.²¹ Gluttony is attracted to the tavern, and when he finds from the owner that she has good ale, hot spices, garlic, and other items, all thoughts of mass and confession are ended. Taverns are obvious-

17 For a developed discussion about the nature of antifraternal literature in the Middle Ages, see Penn R. Szittyá, *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature*. Princeton Legacy Library (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

18 James Simpson, *Piers Plowman: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies (1990; Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 2007), 59.

19 James Brosamer, “Medieval Gluttony and Drunkenness: Consuming Sin in Chaucer and Langland,” Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1998, 230–32.

20 Brosamer, “Medieval Gluttony” (see note 19), 230.

21 Bloomfield, *Piers Plowman as Fourteenth-Century Apocalypse* (see note 3), 199.

ly a staple of the medieval village and town, and they represent a kind of other space – a location to where one can retreat from the outside world and a space in which the rules of operation are different from those in the outside world.

If readers survey those who are there – perhaps even as Gluttony did – they find a seamstress, some who oversee games for sporting events, a coachman, a prostitute named “Clarice” in the same poetic line as “þe Clerk of þe chirche” (5.311), a ditch digger, someone who plays the fiddle (“a Ribibour,” 5.314), and a rope maker among other persons. Ralph Hanna suggests that Langland’s intention is to see the tavern as “the devil’s church.”²² In that way, Langland’s vision parallels the representation of the tavern in Chaucer’s “Pardoner’s Tale.” In the midst of this scene, Clement the Cobbler gives up his coat for a game of “new faire” (5. 320). As Elizabeth Kirk notes, the game works on the basis of things that are unequal being exchanged. Clement puts up his coat, and Hick his hood, with Hick also having to put up money and the price of some ale in exchange.²³

The trick, of course, is that whoever grumbles at the arrangement after the bet must provide “a Galon ale” (5.335). Clearly, the point would be not to have to pay it for oneself, but to get the other to do so. In the midst of the game, the true spirit of play represented by the wager and the multiple observers who are arbiters of value comes out with “lat go þc cuppe” (5.336; let go the cup). The betting and the drinking of rounds increase until Glutton in a spirit of high merriment had consumed a “galon and a gille” (5. 339) – even more than the wager. Glutton stays until time for evening prayers, and experiencing a bodily elimination of a “potel in a poternoster while” (5.341; four pints in the time that was required to say the Lord’s Prayer) and, of course, a fart. All of these are part of the elaborate game of the tavern. That his process of elimination is marked in the amount of time required for a liturgical text to be said suggests how the sacred and the secular have been merged in this tavern game – one that start with a wager over a coat and that now has turned into a drinking game.²⁴

Glutton has difficulty standing up, and he is accompanied out the door by Clement onto whose lap Glutton throws up. The realism here is all too clear. Cer-

²² Ralph Hanna, *The Penn Commentary on Piers Plowman* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 2:144.

²³ Elizabeth D. Kirk, “Notes,” *Piers Plowman*, trans. by E. Talbot Donaldson (New York: Norton, 1990), 49.

²⁴ For mostly German medieval examples of drinking and drunkenness, see the contribution to this volume by Albrecht Classen. As he notes, however, the issue of excessive drinking has always been a universal one and has been addressed in literature and didactic texts all over the world and throughout time.

tainly, Langland must have seen a drunken man fall out of the door of a tavern to record the story with such detail. In this scene, the poet is imagining the extreme which hunger will later check in the plowing of the half acre scene.²⁵ Here what seems apparent is that good ale has been wasted, and that the game itself is a product of excess. Glutton loses perspective in the game. Is it not poetic justice that Clement who begins the game is the recipient of Glutton's vomit? Glutton goes home, awakens, and is ready to continue the feasting and games of the tavern. Upon awakening, he thinks he is still in the tavern. Glutton receives a rebuke from his wife. Then he promises that he will "neuere fyssh on [þe] Fryday defyen in my wombe / Til Abstinence myn Aunt haue gyue me leue, / And yet haue I hated hire al my life tyme" (5.382–84; never to eat fish on Friday be fed to my stomach until Abstinence my aunt gives me permission, and yet I have hated her all my life). If the world of the tavern is the world of excess, so is his confession which seems extreme.

The eating of fish on Friday was a standard part of the medieval diet. He promises to avoid that! The movement from the world of gaming and drinking to an extreme form of abstinence seems impossible. At the same time, it suggests how the tavern was a world where the values in society have been turned upside down. From this scene it would seem apparent that drinking and gaming are not a part of the balance that Langland is seeking, but it would also seem apparent that the potential for joy and entertainment have been overcome by excess.

III. Playing and Working on Piers's Half Acre

From Piers the Plowman, the various pilgrims learn the path to St. Truth – the object of Reason's sermon – but the way is hopelessly complex. In fact, after an allegorical description that sounds a great deal like following a spiritual path after the order of the Ten Commandments, Piers promises to lead them toward their goal after the agricultural season is over.

In Passus 6, the poem attempts to address the decline in the feudal structure with a reassertion of a new kind of structure where people work together for the common good. Here the poem's text becomes almost transparent in its reference, but still the literal features, such as the half acre itself, are ideological battlegrounds upon which he may experiment with a possible solution to the breach in the social contract, which is also a breach in the way society becomes a mirror

25 Jill Mann, "Eating and Drinking in *Piers Plowman*," *Essays and Studies* 32 (1979): 26–43.

of Trinitarian theology. Under the image of the pilgrimage, Piers “substitutes” the plowing of the half acre so that it is actually the search for St. Truth.²⁶

Since Piers knows what Truth is and also because he knows the correct path, he is the correct leader for the group. On Piers's half acre all social classes must work in ways that are appropriate to their social status. Piers's new world order is built around agricultural labor and its support by others across social class lines. Ironically, this actually places agriculture and agricultural labor at the center of attention. It inverts the social pyramid. Lower class women are to do what medieval art always depicts them as doing – spinning wool as daughters of Eve. Thus they provide clothing. The “louely ladies” (6.10), since they are socially above the others, will embroider ecclesiastical garments as they have done since the earliest days in England.²⁷ At the same time, the men are to devote themselves to plowing or other agricultural labors – an image of the Prologue of the poem. The knight, the highest of all mentioned here, rather than plowing, will perform his proper duties – guarding. Piers asks that “þou kepe holy kirke and myselue / Fro wastours and wikkide men þat [wold me destruye” (6.27–28; you keep holy church and me from wasters and wiked men that would destroy me). Hunting, a leisure preoccupation among the noble classes and presented in the literature of the courtly class as adventure. Literary texts describes leisure activity as normative, and here the behavior that could be termed leisure and entertainment is turned to helpful ends for the community. Readers have only to consider how hunting is not only a reality within their culture, but is incorporated into fiction itself in a text such as Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*. The knight is willing to learn now to engage plowing, but Piers has a task for him that is more normal for his social class status. For Langland, leisure activities must always be turned to what will aid the body politic. Hunting will rid Piers of those animals that threaten the agricultural survival of the half acre – a microcosm of the earth.

26 The concept of the substitutionary pilgrimage is well documented in the Middle Ages. In all cases that which is substituted bore a relationship to pilgrimage. For example, a window depicting pilgrimage was given to York Minster because the donor was unable to pursue an actual pilgrimage. Langland's substitution of the plowing of the half acre for pilgrimage certainly places him beyond the normative understanding. Yet the idea accords with his model of the way meaning occurs. See John A. Burrow, “The Action of Langland's Second Vision,” *Essays on Medieval Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 79–101. See Gavin Fort, “‘Make a Pilgrimage for Me’: The Role of Place in Late Medieval Proxy Pilgrimage,” *Travel, Time, and Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time: Explorations of World Perceptions and Processes of Identity Formation*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 22 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 424–45.

27 J. A. W. Bennett, “Notes,” William Langland, *Piers Plowman*, ed. J. A. W. Bennett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 198–99.

In addition, the knight is to deal honorably with his tenants. A covenant, which is an accepted sign in chivalry,²⁸ sealed between the knight and Piers, ensures a stable arrangement in Piers's half acre.

Several of these points require deeper investigation to uncover not only the reassigned role of the knight, but also the way in which his leisure activity is seen as working toward the good in the "re-foundation of the commonwealth" that Piers has modeled on "an agricultural team."²⁹ First, Piers certainly keeps in place many of the older systems of order in medieval society, but for the knight who is certainly at the top of the social pyramid, Piers suggests that the knight's activity in hunting to stop rabbits and foxes, wild boars and buck that break down fences, and to have falcons that will stop birds from stealing the grain will be helpful to him. While others on the half acre are assigned particular activities, the knight's typical leisure time activities will sustain this new commonwealth represented by the half acre. These are, of course, the typical labors noted in courtly literature for the noble classes, both men and women.

As a leisure time activity, hunting "gave nobility the opportunity to assert their social primacy over the inhabitants within their domains whose lands they ranged across at will during a hunt," and at the same time, the experience provided for nobility, not only a control over those domains, but also as a means for exercise for their own health.³⁰ In a real sense then, while as Ralph Hanna notes that Piers may be building his society from the lowest level upwards, Langland's assignment through Piers for the knight to continue his usual activities is not only an assertion of his social class and superiority over others, but also supportive of Langland's desire to reassert a pre-Plague economy that in many ways was a kind of pipe dream after the ravages of the Black Death.³¹

While work begins in earnest on the half acre, and all seems to accord with the kind of ideological harmony that brings together work and leisure as Langland envisions it, all is not well for a long period of time. As in the Prologue where wasters will devour what is obtained through hard work, they stop their labor at "heigh prime" (6.112; at nine a.m.). When Piers begins to survey his work, he notes they begin singing "how trolly lolly" (6.116), apparently a kind of worthless song that is indicative of their not working. These are the songs

28 Myra Stokes, *Justice and Mercy in Piers Plowman: A Reading of the B Text Visio* (London: Crown Helm, 1984), 196.

29 Ralph Hanna, *The Penn Commentary on Piers Plowman* (see note 22), 2:214–16.

30 Newman, *Daily Life in the Middle Ages* (see note 10), 172, 174. See also the contribution to this volume by William Mahan.

31 Hanna, *The Penn Commentary on Piers Plowman* (see note 22), 2:214–23.

of the “alehouse” as opposed to the hard laboring poor that Piers represents.³² Unlike other songs of minstrels that are intended to enliven the spirit, this song is indicative of sheer laziness and idle behavior. That it is followed on by the sharp words of a Breton who tells Piers to “go pissen with his plow” (6.155; to go piss with his plow), perhaps a euphemism that is designed to show a kind of cultural word play. They now believe they have mastery over Piers and will destroy anything that he produces. While Piers next calls in the knight to assert authority over the workers, the knight by his tone of voice oriented toward courtesy (6.165) is completely ineffectual to the needs at hand. Piers must instead call in the natural force of Hunger, whose behavior gains a level of work out of the pilgrims turned agricultural laborers that is effective for a while, but it too fails in the end.

What can be said about this scene, however, is that leisure was seen to be effective, but that human greed undercut a social system that upheld the traditional behaviors of the knight. Perhaps it is fair to say that Langland was not at all sure that the previous behaviors were sustainable in a world of post-Plague England.

IV. Tournament Play and Sacred Story

The implicit conclusion from the first portion of the poem, typically called the *Visio* by scribal markings in which work and the production of it ultimately conclude, is not seen to produce understanding. The Dreamer in the second part of the poem, typically called the *Vita*, involves the quest for understanding another narrative strain in the quest for Truth: the meaning of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest. Various sources including the friars, Wit, Study, and Imagination attempt to provide Will with a definition and example of each. In large measure, this portion of the poem remains an intellectual thicket more attuned to the world of the medieval theologian than the characters Piers and Will around whom meaning resides.

In a narrative that seems more discontinuous than continuous, in Passus 16 Langland begins a narrative sequence that explores imaginatively the representation of human history following the demands of *Heilsgeschichte* that continues to the conclusion of the poem. In Will's attempt to understand the Trinity, he first meets Abraham on “myd lenten sonday” (16.172; Laetare Sunday), then Moses,

³² Anne M. Scott, *Piers Plowman and the Poor* (Dublin and Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 2004), 86.

and finally the Samaritan whose images of the Trinity seem most helpful to Will's understanding. When Will awakens from that dream sequence, he is at Palm Sunday and is confused about exactly what he is seeing. Liturgically speaking, he is witnessing the entrance of Jesus into the holy city of Jerusalem, but the cast of characters involved is of chief interest to the current investigation. The person in question is

Oon semblabe to þe Samaritan and somdeel to Piers þe Plow[man]
 Barfoot on an Asse bak bootless can prikye
 Wiþouten spores oþer spere; sparkliche he lokede
 As is þe kynde of a knight þat comeþ to be dubbed,
 To geten hym gilte spores [and] galoches ycouped. (18.9–14)

[One resembling the Samaritan and somewhat Piers the Plowman
 Barefoot on an ass's back bootless came riding
 Without spurs or spear: sprightly was his look
 As is the nature of a knight that comes to be dubbed
 To get himself gilt spurs and engraved shoes.]

Further, this figure is noted to be Christ, who will “Iuste in Piers armes” (18.22; joust in Piers’ arms) and have a helmet and hauberk, which is equated with human nature. The event of Good Friday that follows the entrance into Jerusalem is described as a tournament. As Newman notes, tournaments “are the most dangerous of sports” because they were “practice for real fighting.”³³ These were arranged as part of elaborate festivities, and in the tales of King Arthur they often occurred after a marriage ceremony. These were the activities of the leisure class, and here in adapting it for a description of the events related to Crucifixion, Langland is creating a multilayered richness of pageantry and ritual at once. The literal event of the Palm Sunday service provokes Will’s dramatic revisiting of the events recorded both in canonical scripture and in several apocryphal sources from the Triumphal entry into Jerusalem until Easter morning when in the liturgical context the *Te Deum* is sung.³⁴ The Christ-knight motif is here given for didactic intent. Here the emphasis is on understanding the Passion in the context of medieval law and at the same time to factor in the regal aspect of tournaments.³⁵

³³ Newman, *Daily Life in the Middle Ages* (see note 10), 176.

³⁴ A. V. C. Schmidt, *The Clerkly Maker: Langland's Poetic Art* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1978), 353.

³⁵ R. A. Waldron, “Langland’s Originality: The Christ-Knight and the Harrowing of Hell,” *Medieval English Religious and Ethical Literature: Essays in Honor of G. H. Russell*, ed. Gregory Kratzmann and James Simpson (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1986), 66–81.

In Passus 19 on Easter Day, as with Palm Sunday, Will is again in church and in his dreaming state he sees the celebration that occurs at the end of the tournament where Jesus has jousted in single combat with Satan. Conscience clarifies that rather than Piers, Will is seeing a Jesus stained with blood and wearing the armor of Piers. The event celebrates some of the typical rituals that one sees in tournaments where a knight might wear an article of clothing – a sleeve or token – for a lady or for the king himself. The rich associations here are important. In this singular event, Langland has blurred the worlds of work and leisure. The world of the medieval tournament is that of entertainment that is a practice for real life defense. At the same time, the literal event of the Crucifixion is real work. In bringing together the two worlds, Langland has actually sought to establish a connection between the two. He has actually done the same thing with the play of knighthood on the half acre that combined both work and leisure.

V. Assessing Minstrelsy under the Langlandian Microscope

The subject of leisure in *Piers Plowman* is extremely subtle and complex, and yet it exists. If leisure includes pastimes that are about lifting the spirits in post-Plague England, they are certainly seen as legitimate. In regards to the music of minstrels, they can be both innocent and corrupt. The intention seems to make the difference. That the poet chooses to identify himself in a C text addition with minstrelsy as a kind of divinely-initiated activity both places the poet in an exalted position, but at the same time reminds readers that not all minstrels are any more than freeloaders at the tables of the king as Haukyn alludes to in Passus 13: 224–40. In that location, he as someone like the poet himself notes he cannot make money from lying to get laughter as the king's minstrels do. In fact, he even goes further to distance himself from them with these words:

Ac for I kan neiþer tabore ne trompe ne tell no gestes,
 Fart ne fiþelen at festes ne harpen
 Iape ne logele ne gentilliche pipe
 Ne neiþer saille ne [sautrie] ne syng wiþ þe gyterne,
 I have no good giftes of pise grete lordes. (13: 230–34)

[But I can neither play the tabor nor the trump nor tell tales
 Fart nor fiddle at feasts nor play the harp
 Joke or juggle not gently play the pipe]

Nor dance not strum the psaltery nor sing with the guitar
I have no good gifts for these great lords.]

What, of course, Haukyn has given us here are the chief activities that are assigned to minstrels at royals feasts. Readers might take it as a satire against the kind of excesses that are typical of entertainment at such events from the time of Edward II, when minstrels were actually curtailed at royal feasts on account of expenses. Instead rather than being paid with money, they were simply rewarded with a splendid meal.³⁶ What, of course, is ironic, is that Haukyn says he can do none of these activities. Instead, his activities are devoted to those that Piers Plowman himself has recommended (13. 236–37). That Langland himself would then choose in his very specific autobiographical passage in the C text to identify himself as a minstrel for God thus picks up on the world of the court, but at the same time rejects the more frivolous examples of conspicuous consumption that one finds elaborated by Haukyn.

The connections between Langland/Will and minstrels begin with a reference as early as the A text, and with the autobiographical section and additions that deal with minstrels who are “Godes munstrals” (C. 9. 136; God’s minstrels).³⁷ In the A text, Holy Church comments to Will that

For thus witnesseth his word (worche thou thereafter):
That love is the levyste thing that our Lord asketh,
And the plente of pes, prechyd in thyn harpe
There thou are merye at mete, when eny byddt the yedde. (A. 1. 135–39)³⁸

[For this his word witnesses (work accordingly):
That love is the most precious thing that our Lord asks,
And the plant of peace, preached in your harp
When you are merry at meat, when anyone bids you sing.]

The situation certainly indicates that these individuals are minstrels who are bidden to sing during dinner and then are paid with their food. In essence, this singing is seen a divine gift itself.

³⁶ Du Boulay, *The England of ‘Piers Plowman’* (see note 7), 33–34.

³⁷ William Langland, *Piers Plowman: An Edition of the C Text*, ed. Derek Pearsall. York Medieval Texts, Second Series (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978). All quotations from the C Text are to this edition. The translations are my own.

³⁸ William Langland, *Piers Plowman: The A Version*, ed. Mícheál Vaughan (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011). All references to the A text version are to this edition, and the translations are my own.

In Passus 5 of the C text that includes what some have called the poem's clearest autobiographical passage, Will does not specifically mention singing, but he notes the recitation of prayers according to liturgical forms during meals at the houses of the noble. Certainly, entertainment could also have been a part of that setting. In Passus 9 of the C text that enumerates those groups that are covered under the pardon that Piers has received, readers note the following words:

Ryht so, ye ryche, yut rather ye sholde
 Welcomen and worschipen and with yours e goed helpen
 Gods munstrals and his messagers and his mery bordiours,
 The whiche arn lunatyk loreles and lepares aboute,
 For vnder godes secret seal here synnes ben keuered. (C.9.134–38)

[Right so, you rich persons, yet rather you should
 Welcome and worship and with your good help
 God munstrals and his messengers and his merry jesters,
 Who are mentally disabled and lordless and are lepers,
 For under God's secret seal their sins are covered.]

Without question, there is much being linked together in this passage, again showing the worthy work that minstrels can do to raise the spirits of others, even those who engage in the world of both visual and verbal play.³⁹ Derek Pearsall suggests that the reference to “Godes munstrals” (God's minstrels) could actually be to the followers of St. Francis.⁴⁰ What can, of course, be observed here is that Langland is getting very close to representing realities of the day, often of those disabled persons who were a part of such minstrel companies. In later periods in English history, such persons would have been part of Elizabethan acting companies.

Taken as a group, the images suggest that Langland is himself inserting his own situation into that of the minstrels and performing a kind of Godly play wherein the music itself is said to raise enjoyment. Such minstrels are thus contrasted to other images in the poem of those who engage in verbal and visual entertainment.

³⁹ Du Boulay, *The England of 'Piers Plowman'* (see note 7), 34–35.

⁴⁰ Derek Pearsall, “Notes,” William Langland, *Piers Plowman: An Edition of the C Text*, ed. Derek Pearsall (see note 37), 167.

Conclusion

In a very real sense, the concepts of leisure, play, and entertainment examined in this volume of essays seem very foreign to the world of *Piers Plowman* on first appearance. In fact, Langland's voice might sound like that voice of stern rebuke in the world of post-Plague England. What does seem clear on the other hand is that Langland is aware of the role of entertainment and its multivariate forms by minstrels. He also seems aware of the world of conspicuous consumption in the medieval tavern through his more than symbolic portrayal of Glutton. He also seems aware of the kind of behavior common in the world of knighthood in terms of hunting and the world of the tournament.⁴¹

If readers consider the contradictions implicit in his comment on those who make songs and invent poetry and those who tell tales as a pastime, there does seem to be a narrow space that he will call "guiltless." In fact, Langland has found a way to make the leisure activities of knighthood profitable and beneficial to the larger community, and in the case of the half acre, quite useful to the agricultural community that certainly must have been in a most fragile state, not only in terms of population in post-Plague England, but also in terms of animals that would seek to make those agricultural products their food. Hunting, the subject of medieval romance and epic, is hardly worthless in this space. That Langland would cast the representation of tournaments and single jousting as the landscape for understanding the events from Palm Sunday to Easter Day suggests that the world of entertainment and practice have real possibilities for the world of sacred story. What Langland seems to be doing in post-Plague England is trying to define what is useful leisure and activity to the new commonwealth that he seeks to establish. Thus rather than being a spoil-sport about entertainment and its possibilities to bring meaning to life, Langland is crafting a poetics that establishes good and necessary leisure as a spiritual reinforcement to the landscape of all human activities.⁴²

⁴¹ See the contribution to this volume by Alan V. Murray.

⁴² I would like to thank Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge for their most helpful suggestions in the revision of this essay.

Maria Raid

The *Ambraser Hofämterspiel*: Playing Cards as a Visual Source for Courtly Life during the Late Middle Ages

The late medieval *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* (loosely translated as “The Courtly Household Cards”¹), which was already mentioned in the introduction to this volume, was a card game for pastime and, therefore, a type of amusement.² Today, the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* is a valuable source which allows us to learn about various aspects of everyday culture and attitudes during the late Middle Ages in Europe. Most importantly, this card game illustrates how people’s clothing reflected their social positions and status in fifteenth-century courtly society.³

This article focuses on the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* primarily as a visual resource. The examination of these courtly playing cards makes it possible to pursue an unusual approach to the topic “Pleasure and Leisure during the Middle Ages.”

The main subjects of the illustrations of the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* are humans – people who lived and served at royal courts. Pictured are officials and servants, their duties, clothing, and status symbols. The illustrations provide insight into courtly life during the late Middle Ages and also into pleasure and leisure activities of that time. In this article, selected examples from the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* will be analyzed. Before turning to such analysis, however, the following discussion will first clarify to what extent and in what way the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* can be considered a historical source about many different temporal, territorial, and social aspects.

1 Timothy B. Husband, *The World in Play. Luxury Cards 1430–1540* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015), 49. In this article, the German name *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* is used.

2 See also the introduction (“Games in a Sixteenth-Century Chronicle”) to this volume by Albrecht Classen. Editor’s note: I am grateful to Maria Raid for bringing this card game to my attention in the first place.

3 Maria Raid, “‘Ein Amt bekleiden...’: Kleidung und Mode als Ausdruck von Stand und Stellung in der Gesellschaft des 15. Jahrhunderts am Beispiel des Ambraser Hofämterspiels,” M.A. thesis, University of Vienna, Austria, 2017.

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The *Ambraser Hofämterspiel*: A Historical Classification

The *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* is, in addition to the *Ambraser Hofjagdspiel* and the *Stuttgarter Kartenspiel*, for example, one of the oldest completely preserved luxury card decks in Europe. It consists of forty-eight cards divided into four suits.⁴ Like the *Ambraser Hofjagdspiel*, the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* is today held by the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, Austria.⁵

The suits are represented by the coats of arms of the kingdoms of Bohemia: gules, a lion rampant queue forchée argent armed, langued and crowned (see Fig. 1), France: azure, three fleurs-de-lis or (see Fig. 2), Hungary: barry of eight gules and argent (see Fig. 7), and the royal coat arms of the Holy Roman Empire: or, an eagle single-headed sable (see Fig. 3). We need to distinguish between the royal coat of arms and the imperial coat of arms of the Holy Roman Empire because the latter shows a double-headed eagle.⁶

There is no plausible explanation as to why the coats of arms of these four realms were used for this game.⁷ The coats of arms are mostly located in the upper left or right corners of the playing cards. As mentioned above, various court offices and court services are displayed on the cards. Forty cards are numbered with Roman numerals from I to X and lettered with the title of the pictured courtly office or service holder. Another eight cards, which are not labeled and lettered, show four crowned kings and four queens sitting on thrones. Only the queen of the suit with the coats of arms of the kingdom of France is also

⁴ *Ambraser Hofjagdspiel*, Basel, Switzerland, around 1440/1445, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Kunstkammer (Inventory number: KK 5018 bis 5071), Online: www.khm.at/de/object/6e9e99a108/ (last accessed on Oct. 12, 2018); *Stuttgarter Kartenspiel*, southwest Germany, around 1430, Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart (Inventory number: KK grau 15 bis 63), Online: https://www.landmuseum-stuttgart.de/sammlungen/kunst-und-kulturgeschichte/kunst-kammer-und-kronschatz/stuttgarter-kartenspiel/?no_cache=1&sword_list%5B0%5D=stuttgarter&sword_list%5B1%5D=kartenspiel (last accessed on Oct. 12, 2018); Ernst Rudolf Ragg, "Vorwort," *Hofämterspiel: Berühmte Kartenspiele*, ed. id., 2nd ed. (1976; Vienna: Piatnik, 1991), 7. ⁵ *Ambraser Hofämterspiel*, Vienna (?), around 1455, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Kunstkammer (Inventory number: KK 5077 bis KK 5124), www.khm.at/de/object/6739658c8c/ (last accessed on Oct. 12, 2018).

⁶ Georg Kugler, "Die Landkarte Europas im 15. Jahrhundert und das Hofämterspiel," *Hofämterspiel: Berühmte Kartenspiele* (see note 4), 57; For more details, see Maria Raid, "Ein Amt bekleiden..." (see note 3), 16–26.

⁷ Maria Raid, "Ein Amt bekleiden..." (see note 3), 23–26.

crowned – generally, it is necessary to distinguish between reigning queens and queens who received their titles by being the wife of a king.

These are the highest male and female positions in any medieval court as exemplified in the four suits of the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel*.

Hierarchical Table with all illustrated court offices and court services in the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel*; translated into English designations; problematic translations are numbered and are briefly discussed below

Roman numeral	Holy Roman Empire	France	Bohemia	Hungary
	King	King	King	King
	Queen	Queen	Queen	Queen
X	Court Seneschal (1.)	Court Seneschal (1.)	Court Seneschal (1.)	Court Seneschal (1.)
IX	Marshal	Marshal	Marshal	Marshal
VIII	Chaplain	Court Mistress (2.)	Medical Doctor	Chancellor
VII	Steward (3.)	Cupbearer	Treasurer	Kitchen Master (4.)
VI	Lady-in-Waiting (5.)	Lady-in-Waiting (5.)	Lady-in-Waiting (5.)	Lady-in-Waiting (5.)
V	Waiter	Cook	Falconer	Crossbowman
IIII	Barber	Stable Boy	Trumpeter	Trumpeter
III	Knight	Court Tailor	Herald	Fisherman
II	Envoy	Hunter	Potter ♀	Baker
I	Court Jester	Court Jester ♀	Court Jester	Court Jester ♀

1. Since the thirteenth century, the “Hofmeister” (literally, ‘Court Seneschal’) has been in charge of the court and the court servants of a religious or secular ruler in the Holy Roman Empire. The “Hofmeister” is also responsible for the entire economy of the court.⁸

⁸ For more details, see Maria Raid, “‘Ein Amt bekleiden...’” (see note 3), 153; Paul-Joachim Heinig, “Hofmeister,” *Handwörterbuch der deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*. Vol. 2: *Geistliche Gerichtsbarkeit-Konfiskation*, ed. Albrecht Cordes, Dieter Werkmüller, and Christa Bertelsmeier-Kierst (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2012), 1094–95; Paul-Joachim Heinig, *Kaiser Friedrich III (1440–1493): Hof, Regierung und Politik*. Vol. 1 (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1999); Werner Rösener, “Hofämter an mittelalterlichen Fürstenhöfen,” *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*. Vol. 1989 (Cologne, Vienna, and Weimar: Böhlau, 1989); Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, “Hofmeister,”

2. Below the queen and the female family members of the royal family, the “Hofmeisterin” (literally, ‘Court Mistress’ or female ‘Court Marshal’) was the highest ranking woman at court. In the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel*, she represents, together with the ladies-in-waiting, the members of the queen’s royal household. Even though she is the person in charge of the queen’s household, she is subordinate to the “Hofmeister.”⁹

3. Since the thirteenth century, the “Truchsess” (‘Steward’) is only responsible for the correct service of food and is in charge of all table servants. Before that, he also had the duties of the “Hofmeister.”¹⁰

4. The “Küchenmeister” (literally, ‘Kitchen Master’) is the administrator of the courtly kitchen.¹¹

5. “Junkfrawe” (modern German spelling: “Jungfrau”) is written on the cards and it literally means virgin. In German, “Jungfrau” was a title for girls and young unmarried women of nobility. As evidenced by the clothing and the history of the term, it can be assumed that the cards depict young unmarried noble women.¹²

The detailed pictures on the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* were made using the woodcut method, colored with watercolors and opaque paint, and additionally refined with silver and gold leaf. The Roman numerals and German lettering were ap-

Deutsches Wörterbuch. Vol.10 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1854–[1961]), 1694–95; Hans Blesten, “Hofmeister,” *Deutsches Rechtswörterbuch: Wörterbuch der älteren deutschen Rechtssprache*. Vol. 5: *Handanlegen bis Hufenweizen* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1953–1960), 1296–97; Sabine Krüger, “Konrad von Megenberg: Werke. Ökonomik,” *Staatschriften des späteren Mittelalters*, ed. eadem. Vol. 3. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1984).

⁹ For more details, see Maria Raid, “‘Ein Amt bekleiden...’” (see note 3), 195; Anja Kircher-Kanemann, “Organisation der Frauenzimmer im Vergleich zu männlichen Höfen,” *Das Frauenzimmer: Die Frau bei Hofe in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. Jan Hirschbiegel, and Werner Paravicini. *Residenzenforschung*, 11 (Stuttgart: Jan Thorbecke, 2000), 235–46.

¹⁰ For more details, see Maria Raid, “‘Ein Amt bekleiden...’” (see note 3), 206–11; Werner Rösener, “Hofämter an mittelalterlichen Fürstenhöfen” (see note 8); Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, “Truchsess,” *Deutsches Wörterbuch*. Vol. 22 (see note 8), 1228; Sebastian Kreiker, “Truchseß,” *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, ed. Thomas Maier and Charlotte Bretscher-Gisiger. Vol. 8: *Stadt (Byzantinisches Reich) bis Werl* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1999), 1069–70.

¹¹ For more details, see: Maria Raid, “‘Ein Amt bekleiden...’” (see note 3), 222; Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, “Küchenmeisterei,” *Deutsches Wörterbuch*. Vol. 11 (see note 8), 2508;

¹² For more details, see: Maria Raid, “‘Ein Amt bekleiden...’” (see note 3), 229–30; Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, “Jungfrau,” *Deutsches Wörterbuch*. Vol. 10 (see note 8), 2388; Anja Kircher-Kanemann, “Organisation der Frauenzimmer im Vergleich zu männlichen Höfen” (see note 9); Brigitte Streich, “Frauenhof und Frauenzimmer,” *Das Frauenzimmer: Die Frau bei Hofe in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit* (see note 9), 247–62.

plied with pen and ink.¹³ Dating and determining the origin of the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* are controversial. There is no record of an assignment or reference to an artist, but it can be assumed that these luxurious cards were manufactured in the Holy Roman Empire in the middle of the fifteenth century.¹⁴ For example, the aforementioned German lettering on the cards and the royal coat of arms of the Holy Roman Empire representing one of the four suits in the card deck indicate such time and place.¹⁵

The *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* and the *Ambraser Hofjagdspiel* were both first mentioned in the *Inventarii weiland der fürstlich durchlaucht erzherzoge Ferdinand von Österreich* (literally: Inventory of the former Princely Highness Archduke Ferdinand of Austria) on Folio 465. The inventory was written in May 1595 after the death of the Habsburgian Archduke Ferdinand II of Austria (1529–1595), Count of Tyrol, etc.¹⁶

In addition to this fact, the use of fine materials as well as the artwork allows us to reach conclusions regarding the social circles in which the game was played. Not everybody could afford such a valuable card game in the Middle Ages. The nobility used to play cards for entertainment, and as a luxury card game, the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* was part of their courtly culture.¹⁷ The illustrations on the cards obviously required social authenticity, despite artistic idealization because the noble patron who commissioned the card game and the players from among the nobility knew the hierarchical court structure and its rules.¹⁸

Hierarchically structured games such as chess or card games also served to anchor the feudal order in the minds of the people.¹⁹ It is a simple comparison:

13 Ernst Rudolf Ragg, “Übersicht der Karten des Hofämterspiels,” *Hofämterspiel: Berühmte Kartenspiele* (see note 4), 8.

14 For more details, see: Maria Raid, “‘Ein Amt bekleiden...’” (see note 3), 21–23.

15 Maria Raid, “Das Ambraser Hofämterspiel: Kleidung als Ausdruck von Stand und Stellung in der höfischen Gesellschaft des 15. Jahrhunderts,” *netzwerk mode textil Jahrbuch 2018*. ed. netzwerk mode textil (Augsburg: Wißner, 2018), 13.

16 In this article, the information in the brackets is the biographical data – not the term of reign or of office; Fritz Koreny, “Das Hofämterspiel,” *Hofämterspiel: Berühmte Kartenspiele* (see note 4), 15–16.

17 Thomas Zotz, “Spiele,” *Höfe und Residenzen im spätmittelalterlichen Reich: Bilder und Begriffe*. Vol. 1: *Begriffe*, ed. Werner Paravicini (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2005), 207; Ulrike Jenni, *Ambraser Hofjagdspiel* (Vienna: Piatnik, 1995), 11.

18 Maria Raid, “Das Ambraser Hofämterspiel,” (see note 15), 13; for more details, see: Maria Raid, “‘Ein Amt bekleiden...’” (see note 3), 16–26.

19 Detlef Hoffmann, “Das Hofämterspiel und seine Stellung in der historischen Entwicklung der Spiele,” *Hofämterspiel: Berühmte Kartenspiele*. (see note 4), 51; see also the introduction (“Categories of games”) to this volume by Albrecht Classen, “Chess in Medieval German Literature: A Mirror of Social-Historical and Cultural, Religious, Ethical, and

without hierarchy, no card games – without hierarchy, no court. In sum, the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* is a persuasive visual source regarding German-speaking aristocratic society of the mid fifteenth century. It is possible that the cards depict particularly a section of the existing hierarchy at the court of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III (1415–1493).²⁰ Like Archduke Ferdinand II of Austria, Emperor Frederick III was a member of the noble family of Habsburg. In 1439, he succeeded Albrecht II of Habsburg (1397–1439) as Senior of the House of Habsburg, and 1440 as King of the Holy Roman Empire after he had been elected by the prince electors.²¹ In 1452 the pope crowned Frederick Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, in Rome.²² Even though the imperial court was peripatetic throughout the Middle Ages and possible residences existed in the various free imperial cities such as Frankfurt, Nuremberg, or Weimar, Frederick III spent more than a quarter of his reign at his residence in Wiener Neustadt – a city south of Vienna. The *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* could possibly have been created in that area.²³

Moral Conditions,” *Chess in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: A Fundamental Thought Paradigm of the Premodern World*, ed. Daniel E. O’Sullivan. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, Vol. 10 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 17–44; Jacobus de Cassolis, *Liber de moribus hominum ac officiis nobilium super ludo scaccorum* (around 1275); Johannes von Reihnfelden, *Tractatus de moribus et disciplina humanae conversationis* (around 1377), and also Johannes von Rheinfelden, *Ludus cartularum moralisticus* (around 1429).
20 Maria Raid, “Das Ambraser Hofämterspiel,” (see note 15), 13; For more details, see: Maria Raid, “Ein Amt bekleiden...” (see note 3), 16–26.

21 Alois Niederstätter, “Das Jahrhundert der Mitte: An der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit,” *Österreichische Geschichte*, ed. Herwig Wolfram, Vol. 5: *Österreichische Geschichte 1400–1522* (Vienna: Ueberreuter, 1996), 140–44.

22 Rudolf Schiefer, “Konzepte des Kaisertums,” *Heilig – Römisch – Deutsch: Das Reich im mittelalterlichen Europa*, ed. Bernd Schneidmüller and Stefan Weinfurter (Dresden: Michael Sandstein, 2006), 56.

23 Peter Moraw, “Fürsten am spätmittelalterlichen deutschen Königshof,” *Principes: Dynastien und Höfe im späten Mittelalter*. ed. Cordula Nolte, Karl H. Spiess, and Ralf G. Werlich (Stuttgart: Jan Thorbecke, 2002), 24–25; Paul-Joachim Heinig, “Der Hof des Kaisers Friedrichs III. – Außenwirkung und nach außen Wirkende,” *Deutscher Königshof, Hoftag und Reichstag im späteren Mittelalter*. ed. Peter Moraw. Vorträge und Forschungen, 48 (Stuttgart: Jan Thorbecke, 2002), 141; see also note 14 and 15.

Selected Playing Cards of the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* as a Visual Resource

Now, having examined the temporal, territorial, and social positions of these individual figures represented by these card game, let us turn to the question what the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* reveals about noble pleasure and leisure activities in the late medieval Holy Roman Empire.

A closer look at the cards of the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* reveals clues for the answer to this question. In addition to important court officials like a marshal, for example, the cards also show a falconer, a knight, a hunter, and court jesters – and all four of them are related to medieval pleasure and leisure activities.²⁴

The intention of the following analysis is to give insight into the historical development of the respective court offices and services. In addition, the tasks and duties of falconers, hunters, knights, and fools are illuminated and, thus, trace the connections between their positions at court and late medieval pleasure and leisure activities.

Falconry and the Falconer

The falconer (see Fig. 1) – Roman numeral V, with the coat of arms of the kingdom of Bohemia – is the highest ranking official among the mentioned examples, *supra* (see hierarchical table). A falconer was (and still is) able to train falcons and other predatory birds. His work with and care of these animals was important for hunting with them, which we know as falconry or hawking.

Falconry originated about 3,000 to 3,500 years ago on the steppes of the North Caucasus and around the Caspian Sea.²⁵ It spread through the Persian and Arabian regions by horsemen, and finally arrived in Europe and North Africa during the period of the second to fourth century C.E.²⁶ Falconry was especially

²⁴ See, for instance, the contribution to this volume by William Mahan and the introduction by Albrecht Classen.

²⁵ Lisa Anna Medrow, “Falkenjagd in Arabien im 8.–13. Jahrhundert,” *Von der Kunst mit Vögeln zu jagen: Das Falkenbuch Friedrichs II. – Kulturgeschichte und Ornithologie*. ed. Landesmuseum für Natur und Mensch Oldenburg (Mainz: Philipp von Zadem, 2008), 15; see also the contribution to this volume by William Mahan.

²⁶ Lisa Anna Medrow, “Falkenjagd in Arabien im 8.–13. Jahrhundert” (see note 25), 16.



Fig. 1: The Falconer [Valkner, V], Facsimile Ambraser Hofämterspiel

popular at European princely courts in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.²⁷ Emperor Frederick II (1194–1250) was its most famous enthusiast.²⁸ He wrote an extensive treatise on it: *De arte venandi cum avibus*, which is still a useful guide for contemporary falconers and ornithologists.²⁹

Besides deer hunting, falconry was the most noble type of hunting during the High Middle Ages.³⁰ The haul, mainly small game like ducks, pheasants

27 Werner Rösener, *Die Geschichte der Jagd: Kultur, Gesellschaft und Jagdwesen im Wandel der Zeit* (Düsseldorf and Zürich: Artemis & Winkler, 2004), 144.

28 Werner Rösener, *Die Geschichte der Jagd* (see note 27), 150.

29 Werner Rösener, *Die Geschichte der Jagd* (see note 27), 154 and 157; see also the introduction (“Hunting for Pleasure”) to this volume by Albrecht Classen.

30 Werner Rösener, “Jagd, Rittertum und Fürstenhof im Hochmittelalter,” *Jagd und die höfische Kultur im Mittelalter*. ed. id. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997) 145; see also the introduction (“Hunting for Pleasure”) to this volume by Albrecht Classen.

and hares, or rabbits, was hunted and killed by trained falcons, hawks, and other predatory birds.³¹ Hunting with birds of prey was special because of their spectacular maneuvers while tracking the haul.³² Moreover, the animals were noble and very expensive.

Furthermore, the falcon is a symbol for the sophisticated courtly art of living.³³ According to the German historian Werner Paravicini, having a falcon perched on one's fist represents the epitome of noble existence.³⁴ The symbolic power of the falcon on a fist is confirmed by the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel*. On the card with the royal coat arms of the Holy Roman Empire, the queen is shown with a falcon on her left gloved fist. Similarly, the French court seneschal carries a falcon on his left gloved fist while riding a horse.³⁵ The falconer, also riding a horse, is shown with two falcons on his right gloved fist.

Hunting took place in groups on horseback or stationary in wide areas such as fields or meadows.³⁶ It was not only a privilege of noblemen, but noblewomen also actively participated.³⁷ This fact indicates that both men and women were integrated into court society, but that court politics was mainly the domain of men.³⁸

Two tragic examples which demonstrate that women took part in falconry as well are the wives of Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519), son and successor to Emperor Frederick III, namely Maria of Burgundy (1457–1482) and Bianca Maria Sforza (1472–1510), both of whom died after riding accidents involving falconry.³⁹

The falconer was also part of the hunting party: he accompanied the group of aristocrats, but not for his own pleasure;⁴⁰ instead, it was one of his duties as court servant. The card possibly shows a falconer in this function – sitting on a horse with his equipment (like lure and glove), wearing a red chaperon as head-

31 Katharina Fietze, *Im Gefolge Dianas: Frauen und höfische Jagd im Mittelalter (1200–1500)*. Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, 59 (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2005), 2–3.

32 Katharina Fietze, *Im Gefolge Dianas* (see note 31), 3.

33 Gerd Heinz-Mohr, *Lexikon der Symbole: Bilder und Zeichen der christlichen Kunst*. (Freiburg i. Br., Basel, and Vienna: Herder Spektrum, 1991), 106.

34 Werner Paravicini, *Die ritterlich-höfische Kultur des Mittelalters* (Sigmaringen: Oldenbourg, 1995), 9.

35 'Court Seneschal'; in German, "Hofmeister"; for more details, see my comments above.

36 Katharina Fietze, *Im Gefolge Dianas* (see note 31), 3.

37 Werner Rösener, *Die Geschichte der Jagd* (see note 27), 163 and 184–89.

38 Werner Paravicini, "Alltag bei Hof," *Alltag bei Hof: 3. Symposium der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen*, ed. id. (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1995), 20.

39 Werner Rösener, *Die Geschichte der Jagd* (see note 27), 164 and 186.

40 Katharina Fietze, *Im Gefolge Dianas* (see note 31), 4.

gear, a girded long-sleeved yellow garment, a light green pants, and knee-high brown (possibly leather) boots with spurs, and with two hooded falcons. His clothing looks robust, made for riding and spending time outdoors.⁴¹

Falconry was a social event with a festive character, a privilege and pleasure for the nobility. But it was not only for their leisure; it also provided representative and educational functions.⁴² A royal hunt, for instance, was part of the royal representation. It was an opportunity to flaunt wealth and power.⁴³ By taking part in hunting, young noblemen and knights acquired the mental and physical abilities and collected experiences that were useful for riding a horse and dealing with weapons.⁴⁴ Cutting and stabbing weapons like swords and pikes were used both in hunting and in war.⁴⁵

The importance of falconry for courtly society is not only evident in the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* on the card of the falconer. The *Ambraser Hofjagdspiel* also deals with this theme as a card game.⁴⁶

Hunting and the Hunter

As already mentioned, in addition to falconry, there were other popular forms of hunting in the Middle Ages, such as deer hunting as mentioned above, and boar and bear hunting.⁴⁷ The hunter (see Fig. 2) – Roman numeral II, with the coat of arms of the kingdom of France – is another card portraying hunting.

The hunter is pictured with an orange-red broad-brimmed round hat over a light brown hood with collar, a girded dark purple garment with long sleeves. His legs and feet are not visible. He is holding two leashed hounds, a bugle, and hunting weapon, a sort of hunting spear for boar hunting.⁴⁸ There are no known records, but it can be assumed that the hunter, similar to the falconer,

⁴¹ For more details, see: Maria Raid, “‘Ein Amt bekleiden...’” (see note 3), 245–50.

⁴² Lisa Anna Medrow, “Falkenjagd im Mittelalter,” *‘Von der Kunst mit Vögeln zu jagen’: Das Falkenbuch Friedrichs II. – Kulturgeschichte und Ornithologie* (see note 25), 18.

⁴³ Werner Rösener, *Leben am Hof: Königs- und Fürstenhöfe im Mittelalter* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2008), 218–19.

⁴⁴ Werner Rösener, *Die Geschichte der Jagd* (see note 27), 145.

⁴⁵ Werner Rösener, “Jagd und Tiere,” *Höfe und Residenzen im spätmittelalterlichen Reich* (see note 18), 327.

⁴⁶ Ulrike Jenni, *Ambraser Hofjagdspiel* (see note 17), 23–30.

⁴⁷ Werner Rösener, “Jagd und Tiere” (see note 45), 327; See also the introduction (“Hunting for Pleasure”) to this volume by Albrecht Classen.

⁴⁸ German name for this kind of spear is ‘Schweinsfeder’; Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*. Vol. 15 (see note 8), 2446.

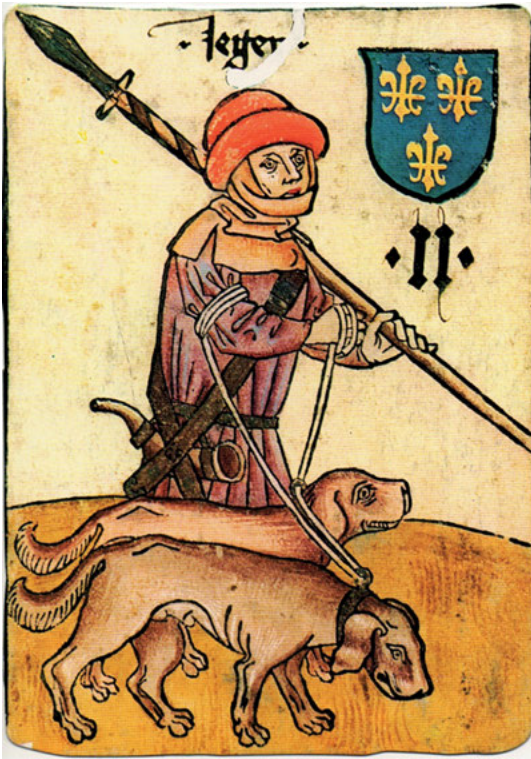


Fig. 2: The Hunter [Jeger, II], Facsimile Ambraser Hofämterspiel

was responsible for the hunting animals, and to that end he was also in charge of training and taking care of the hounds.

As with falconry, hunting with hounds was less about securing food. Pleasure was a priority for the medieval hunting party.⁴⁹ Like the falconer, the hunter was part of the escort, which is also suggested by the playing card on which a hunter is shown in a similar outfit, dressed and equipped for roaming and hunting in forests.⁵⁰

Already Emperor Charlemagne (742–814) hosted royal hunting parties in his regency.⁵¹ The significance of hunting for the court is even more evident through so-called hunting books, for example those by Emperor Frederick II or Emperor

⁴⁹ Sigrd Schwenk, “Weidwerk,” *Lexikon des Mittelalters*. Vol. 8: *Stadt (Byzantinisches Reich) bis Werl* (see note 10), 2101–04.

⁵⁰ For more details, see: Maria Raid, “Ein Amt bekleiden...” (see note 3), 310–14.

⁵¹ Werner Rösener, “Jagd und Tiere” (see note 45), 326.

Maximilian I.⁵² The importance is also highlighted by the Latin title “Romani Imperii Supremus Venator,” invented by the Habsburgs. This title was, for example, part of Emperor Maximilian’s title as ruler.⁵³

In sum, in the Middle Ages every type of hunting was a pleasure activity for the noble hunting party. In addition, this delight was not without further benefits. Monarchs and high-ranking dignitaries took advantage of the activity to represent and add legitimacy to their power and wealth. Furthermore, hunting had an instructional purpose for young male members of the nobility.

Tournaments and Knights

Noblemen gained experience in dealing with horses and weapons at tournaments. These were similar to sporting events, but they had also a military connection. Initially, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, whole groups of knights fought against each other with sharp weapons.⁵⁴ Many were killed and wounded as a result, and eventually this type of competition was banned at the urging of the Catholic Church – though in vain since tournaments continued to be extremely popular far into the early modern age.⁵⁵ Thus the duel was established, in which two knights fought against each other with blunt weapons and special armor by jousting or sword fighting.⁵⁶ Until the sixteenth century, the disciplines involved in tournaments were important exercises for battle.⁵⁷

How a participant in a tournament might have looked in the middle of the fifteenth century is displayed by the card with the knight (see Fig. 3) – Roman numeral III, with the royal coat of arms of the Holy Roman Empire. His pretentious clothing seems more appropriate for a festive and representative occasion.

52 Thomas Zotz, “Unterhaltung und Zeitvertreib,” *Höfe und Residenzen im spätmittelalterlichen Reich* (see note 17), 196.

53 In German: “des Römischen Reiches höchster Jäger”; literally: highest-ranked hunter of the Holy Roman Empire; Thomas Zotz, “Unterhaltung und Zeitvertreib” (see note 53), 196.

54 Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, “Turniere [Turnierplatz],” *Höfe und Residenzen im spätmittelalterlichen Reich* (see note 17), 502. See also the contribution to this volume by Alan V. Murray.

55 Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, “Turniere [Turnierplatz]” (see note 54), 502; see also Romedio Schmitz-Esser, “Der Tod mit der Lanze in der Hand: Die Bestattung von Turnierkämpfern,” id., *Der Leichnam im Mittelalter: Einbalsamierung, Verbrennung und die kulturelle Konstruktion des toten Körpers*. *Mittelalter-Forschungen*, 48, 2nd ed. (2014; Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2016), 520–25.

56 Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, “Turniere [Turnierplatz]” (see note 54), 502.

57 Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, “Turniere [Turnierplatz]” (see note 54), 502.



Fig. 3: The Knight [Renner, III], Facsimile Ambraser Hofämterspiel

He is armed with a crossbow, a sword, and a helmet with something like a crest: blue and yellow feathers and a waving yellow ribbon. A heraldic helmet crest was worn by tournament participants and was inherited by subsequent generations of a dynasty.⁵⁸

While considering visual sources, it can be difficult to determine what kinds of materials were displayed.⁵⁹ In this case, it is obvious that the knight is not dressed in full garb. He is wearing a partly-colored hood with a collar edged with cut work in blue and white, as well as a white girded short houppelande

⁵⁸ Josef Fleckenstein, "Ritter, -tum, -stand: II. Erscheinungsbild des Ritters," *Lexikon des Mittelalters*. Vol. 7: *Planudes bis Stadt (Rus)* (see note 10), 865–66; Werner Paravicini, *Die ritterlich-höfische Kultur des Mittelalters* (see note 34), 15.

⁵⁹ For more details, see: Maria Raid, "Ein Amt bekleiden..." (see note 3), 86–96.

with a blue left sleeve. The pants are light yellow as is the visible crakow, the pointed shoe, complete with spur.⁶⁰

Beginning in the thirteenth century, tournaments with costumed participants were held and, beginning in the fifteenth century, there were also tournaments with fictional storylines. For example, a so-called “tournoi à thème” was organized in 1596 upon the occasion of the baptism of the daughter of Landgrave Maurice of Hesse in Kassel.⁶¹

By training as a squire at the court of a prince, noble male adolescents were prepared for their role in knightly and courtly society.⁶² After having been knighted, they would have completed their training, and subsequently these noblemen became low officials in the court hierarchy.⁶³ This new chapter in their lives was often initiated by participating in various tournaments.⁶⁴ Having originated in eleventh century France, such tournaments reached the Holy Roman Empire and England in the twelfth century.⁶⁵ Commonly, they were part of court festivities such as princely/royal weddings, peace celebrations, carnival events, meetings of spiritual and temporal dignitaries, or, as in the example above, baptisms and christenings.⁶⁶

The winner of a tournament usually received his defeated opponent's armor and horse as a prize.⁶⁷ As already stated, a knight's participation in a tournament was not just for his amusement. It was about gaining experience and increasing his honor.⁶⁸ Thus, only the spectators who were present were there for pure pleasure.

Court Jesters as Entertainers

For the amusement of courtly society, male and female court jesters served at many medieval courts in Europe. They were mainly present at banquets, during

⁶⁰ For more details, see: Maria Raid, “‘Ein Amt bekleiden...’” (see note 3), 286–91.

⁶¹ Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, “Turniere [Turnierplatz]” (see note 54), 503.

⁶² Werner Rösener, *Leben am Hof* (see note 43), 157.

⁶³ Werner Rösener, *Leben am Hof* (see note 43), 157; Werner Paravicini, *Die ritterlich-höfische Kultur des Mittelalters* (see note 34), 3.

⁶⁴ Werner Rösener, *Leben am Hof* (see note 43), 157.

⁶⁵ Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, “Turniere [Turnierplatz],” (see note 54), 502.

⁶⁶ Werner Rösener, *Leben am Hof* (see note 43), 199; Werner Paravicini, *Die ritterlich-höfische Kultur des Mittelalters* (see note 34), 13; Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, “Turniere [Turnierplatz]” (see note 54), 502.

⁶⁷ Werner Paravicini, *Die ritterlich-höfische Kultur des Mittelalters* (see note 34), 12.

⁶⁸ Werner Paravicini, *Die ritterlich-höfische Kultur des Mittelalters* (see note 34), 6.

hunting, at triumphal and funeral processions, or on holidays; in everyday life, however, they performed other services.⁶⁹ In German-speaking countries, court jesters were documented for the first time in Tyrol in 1288.⁷⁰

There were two types of court jesters. One was the ‘fool’: a physically and/or mentally impaired person.⁷¹ According to Werner Mezger, a German ethnologist and specialist in this area, the purpose of a jester’s actions was to instill humility in the powerful, thus reminding them of their own ephemeral nature.⁷² Nevertheless, the physical and/or mental deficits of those people were amusing to members of court society.⁷³ Then there were the jokers, buffoons, and clowns who served as court jesters. Their task was to eliminate boredom, entertain with jokes and performances, even to defuse conflicts and regulate the competitive behavior among those in court.⁷⁴

From the fourteenth century onwards, that type of court jester was a member of most European courts.⁷⁵

A representative of this type of jester is Kunz von der Rosen (about 1470–1519), the court jester of Emperor Maximilian I.⁷⁶ “Nirgends erscheint er als Tölpel oder als geistig Beschränkter, mit dem man seine Späße treiben konnte; vielmehr wird er fast durchwegs als Mann voller Humor und Schläue geschildert, der den Kreis der kaiserlichen Berater nicht selten durch Scharfsinn und politischen Weitblick verblüffte”⁷⁷ (Nowhere does he appear as a fool or as a mentally limited man with whom they could joke; rather, he is almost always portrayed as a

69 Hans Rudolf Velten, “Hofnarren,” *Höfe und Residenzen im spätmittelalterlichen Reich* (see note 17) 66; Lutz S. Malke, “Nachruf auf Narren,” *Narren: Porträts, Feste, Sinnbilder, Schwankbücher und Spielkarten aus dem 15. bis 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. id. (Leipzig: Faber & Faber, 2001), 10; for a special approach to this topic, see also: Albrecht Classen, “The Marginalized Figure of the Dwarf and the Leper: Disability in the World of Tristan and Isolde and Beyond,” *Studi medievali* 58.2 (2017), 675–96; Yona Pinson, *The Fool’s Journey: A Myth of Obsession in Northern Renaissance Art* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009); Max Harris, *Sacred Folly: A New History of the Feast of Fools* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014); Robert Hornback, *The English Clown Tradition from the Middle Ages to Shakespeare*. Studies in Renaissance Literature, 26 (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Brewer, 2009).

70 Hans Rudolf Velten, “Hofnarren” (see note 69), 66.

71 Lutz S. Malke, “Nachruf auf Narren” (see note 69), 11–12.

72 Werner Mezger, “Narr: IV. Soziale Realität,” *Lexikon des Mittelalters*. Vol. 6: *Lukasbilder bis Plantagenêt* (see note 10), 1025.

73 Lutz S. Malke, “Nachruf auf Narren” (see note 69), 11–12.

74 Hans Rudolf Velten, “Hofnarren” (see note 69), 66.

75 Hans Rudolf Velten, “Hofnarren” (see note 69), 66.

76 Werner Mezger, *Hofnarren im Mittelalter: Vom tieferen Sinn eines seltsamen Amtes*. (Constance: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 1981), 88.

77 See: Werner Mezger, *Hofnarren im Mittelalter* (see note 76), 73.



Fig. 4: Court Jester [Narr, I], Facsimile Ambraser Hofämterspiel

man full of humor and cleverness, who often astonished the circle of imperial advisers by his acumen and political vision.)

The *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* has four court jesters: in every suit one (Roman numeral I). The four of them do not correspond with the expected image of court jesters in a card game; just as the typical illustration on a joker card today. Their clothing gives the impression that they are beggars; they are not colorfully dressed and their clothes look worn.

The jester on the card with the royal coat of arms of the Holy Roman Empire (see Fig. 4) wears a monochrome – coat, the color being a kind of bright orange/dark yellow, with a hood and plays a drum and a flute. Playing such instruments as well as singing were part of the entertainment provided by court jesters.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Lutz S. Malke, “Nachruf auf Narren” (see note 69), 10.



Fig. 5: Court Jester [Narr, I], Facsimile Ambraser Hofämterspiel

His hood with small bells looks like a foolscap. His clothes can also be described as motley.⁷⁹ The clothing, adorned with small bells, is in accordance with the high and late medieval sartorial laws. According to Eike of Repgow's *Sachsenspiegel* (ca. 1225; The Saxon Mirror), a 'fool,' a physically and/or mentally impaired human, was not considered capable of committing crime. Instead, his guardian was held accountable for any offenses committed by the 'fool.' The state of the fool's clothes indicated to everyone that they should know with whom they were dealing.⁸⁰

The jester on the card with the coat of arms of the kingdom of Bohemia (see Fig. 5) is also playing an instrument, in this case the bagpipes, and he wears a monochrome coat in grayish brown with a hood, or in motley colors with a fools-

⁷⁹ For more details, see: Maria Raid, "Ein Amt bekleiden..." (see note 3), 320–22.

⁸⁰ Lutz S. Malke, "Nachruf auf Narren" (see note 69), 15.



Fig. 6: Court Jester [Narryn, I], Facsimile Ambraser Hofämterspiel

cap.⁸¹ His hairstyle is a tonsure, a grotesque blemish, which was to contrast with the cleric's tonsure.⁸²

The female court jester from the suit with the coat of arms of the kingdom of France (see Fig. 6) wears a monochromatic brown dress, girded with bags, which were possibly for donations and alms.⁸³ In her right hand, she's carrying an item with a face, presumably a little round mirror. The mirror was seen as the symbol of female haughtiness, vanity and the transience of life, as well of self-knowledge, as we know so well from the famous *Till Eulenspiegel* (first printed in

⁸¹ For more details, see: Maria Raid, "Ein Amt bekleiden..." (see note 3), 324–25.

⁸² Werner Mezger, "Narr: II. Erscheinungsbild," *Lexikon des Mittelalters*. Vol. 6: *Lukasbilder bis Plantagenêt* (see note 10), 1024–25.

⁸³ For more details, see: Maria Raid, "Ein Amt bekleiden..." (see note 3), 323–24.



Fig. 7: Court Jester [Narryn, II], Facsimile Ambraser Hofämterspiel

1510, with woodcuts).⁸⁴ The oldest accoutrement of a ‘fool’/court jester is a mace as a counterpart to the royal scepter. The mace became a *marotte*, a scepter with a carved miniature head on it as a symbol of self-centeredness, which finally evolved into a mirror.⁸⁵

The female court jester on the card with the coat of arms of the kingdom of Hungary (see Fig. 7) wears a monochrome yellow garment and a bag around her neck. Her hair is covered with a white cloth.⁸⁶ She is not playing an instrument or carrying anything expected of her, but it seems that she is waving with her right hand. With her left hand, she is gathering her skirt, exposing her bare legs, which seems like an indecent gesture.

⁸⁴ Gerhard Jaritz, “Spiegel, “ *Lexikon des Mittelalters*. Vol. 7: *Planudes bis Stadt (Rus)* (see note 10), 2100–01.

⁸⁵ Werner Mezger, “Narr: II. Erscheinungsbild” (see note 82), 1024–25.

⁸⁶ For more details, see: Maria Raid, “Ein Amt bekleiden...” (see note 3), 326–27.

It is questionable as to why the court jesters from the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* were pictured in this way because, as previously mentioned, from the fourteenth century onwards, court jesters not physically and/or mentally impaired were part of most European courts. However, without a doubt, the four cards show that a court jester provided a multi-functional service to his court. They were responsible for entertainment with jokes, imitations, instruments, singing, etc., and could be viewed as a counterpoint to the monarch. It seems that the artist wanted to indicate this complexity.

It cannot be clearly stated which types of court jesters are represented in the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel*, but their clothing is apparently not prestigious.⁸⁷ Hans Rudolf Velten has assumed that a court jester's clothes evidenced whether he entertained the court with humor or with his physical and/or mental impediment; after all, court jesters like Kunz von der Rosen wore impressive garments in portraits.⁸⁸ Compared to the kings and queens as the highest cards in the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel*, the pictured male and female court jesters, with the Roman numeral I as the lowest cards in the game, seem like their hierarchical and visual counterparts in the card game. This is probably a result of the rules of the game.

Conclusion

From the examples given above, it can be stated that leisure activities during the late Middle Ages were not just for pure enjoyment. These selected examples were all vital parts of noble leisure time, but not particularly for their own enjoyment. To analyze the duties of hunters, falconers, knights, and court jesters in the context of the topic "Pleasure and Leisure in the Middle Ages," the study of the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel* makes possible a different approach. It does not suffice to pay exclusive attention to the nobility, for whose delight leisure activities and entertainments took place. There were many different kinds of people, such as servants and officials among others, involved in the execution of activities for the pleasure and leisure of the nobility.

The falconer, the hunter, the knight, and the court jesters were just a few of those, but they were so important to an imperial/royal court that they were pictured on the cards of the *Ambraser Hofämterspiel*, in addition to the expected members of court (kings, queens, marshals, ladies-in-waiting, for example) and other unexpected court servants (trumpeter, barber, cook, female potter).

⁸⁷ For more details, see Maria Raid, "Ein Amt bekleiden..." (see note 3), 327–28.

⁸⁸ Hans Rudolf Velten, "Hofnarren" (see note 69), 68.

This is why we can conclude that they, as well as their duties, were seen as an essential part of a court.

This assumption is not surprising: court jesters accompanied the monarch constantly and were thus a crucial aspect of royal/imperial representation.⁸⁹ Also the falconer and the hunter were an essential part of the royal/imperial retinue, considering that the two court services attended the courtly hunting party and were visible in public together with the monarch and the nobility. The knight was both a representative of his aristocratic family and of his feudal lord and monarch. The hierarchically structured court determined who was to be a participant of activities and festivities and what roles they had to play in them. As previously stated, card games were an intricate analogy to prevailing power structures: hierarchy is fundamental in virtually every society, and even more so for a court.

Besides representation and enjoyment, tournaments and courtly hunts also served a further purpose: young noblemen gained experience in dealing with horses and weapons – learning by doing. Court jesters and their entertainment may have made intellectual demands on a courtly audience because subtle humor requires preeminently intellect, but also education.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Hans Rudolf Velten, “Hofnarren” (see note 69), 66.

⁹⁰ See also Albrecht Classen, “Laughter as the Ultimate Epistemological Vehicle in the Hands of Till Eulenspiegel,” *Neophilologus: An International Journal of Modern and Medieval Language and Literature* 92 (2008): 417–89.

Marilyn L. Sandidge

Gawain, Giants, and Tennis in the Fifteenth Century

Whether this begins in a forest setting associated with aristocrat leisure or at a feast in King Arthur's castle, a light-hearted, playful tone often permeates their world as the knights, following King Arthur's lead, amuse themselves by challenging others to prove their skills. Competition in tournaments and contests of love and strange adventures in exotic lands form the bond that unites the members of King Arthur's Round Table. Furthermore, it is often Arthur's demand for entertainment before he eats that sets the action rolling, often a scene where a stranger enters the court to challenge the knights to compete with him in a contest. In the late fifteenth-century romance *The Turke and Sir Gawain* (1500), the unknown character challenges the court to play the beheading game, known to us from other works such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which eventually leads to Sir Gawain playing a deadly game of tennis with ruthless giants.¹

The unknown stranger who walks into the heart of the British nation to challenge King Arthur's court in this work is called the Turke, which most certainly played on the audience's fears of Turkish invasions roughly half a century after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks.² The relative stability of early

1 The work is found only in the British Library manuscript known as the Percy Folio, B.L. Additional MS 27879, 38–46. The manuscript is a compilation of late medieval and early Renaissance popular works copied around 1650 and heavily damaged, according to its later owner, Bishop Thomas Percy (1729–1811), when found being used to start a fire by parlor maids at the house of his friend, Humphrey Pitt in Shropshire. Although the only surviving copy of this romance is badly damaged, the general plot is clear because a number of episodes mirror those from other works where Sir Gawain is tested, and my analysis is drawn from a reading of the passages still extant. I use the TEAMS edition: *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales*, ed. Thomas Hahn. Medieval English Text Series. (Medieval Institute Publications: Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1995), 337–58. In addition to the famous late fourteenth-century alliterative poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, extant in B.L. Cotton Nero A x, the beheading game appears in an abbreviated version of the tale *The Greene Knight*, ca. 1500, also found in the Percy Folio, B.L. Additional MS 27879, 203–10. See, for the background of beheading tales, Larry D. Benson, *Art and Tradition in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1965). Also see Albrecht Classen's introduction to this volume for a discussion of games in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

2 In other medieval works by Christian writers any Muslim could be referred to as a Saracen or a Turk, but given the widespread fear across Europe of the Ottoman Turks when this work was

Tudor rule after the decades of carnage caused by the War of the Roses and clearly reflected in Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* (1469–1470) a few decades earlier, might have allowed authors to look beyond Britain's borders once again for fresh antagonists worthy of challenging these ideal Christian knights.³ Considered the best in the land, Arthur's knights in this work display a callous, rather haughty attitude toward this outsider at the beginning of the poem and see no reason to take his games seriously. However, after Gawain's participation in the initial challenge, he discovers he is obliged to play on until he completes a journey made up as a series of noble games, including tennis, meant to deepen his understanding of true chivalry.

The poem begins in a conventional way with Arthur receiving entertainment before he eats, although in his court, entertainment is not usually performances by musicians, minstrels, dancers, or tumblers, and the like. Here a strange "burne" (12; warrior) enters to challenge anyone there to exchange blows with him "as a brother" (16), in other words to play the beheading game.⁴ The knights' responses are also typical: Kay replies rudely displaying his menacing privilege by threatening to throw the guest to the ground. Always concerned about maintaining courteous speech and behavior, Gawain scolds Kay for being "lewd" (30) or uncourteous in his reply. He himself, though, then condescendingly speaks about this person, asking Kay how much honor he would gain if he destroyed a person "want of his wit" (31), implying that only a very foolish person would challenge the Knights of the Round Table. Gawain is from the beginning focused on the public perception of honor won only through physical competition and courteous speech and his haughty disdain for this stranger from abroad raises questions about his understanding of what truly honorable behavior is.

composed, this Turk is probably an Ottoman Turk, the primary figure in the construction of "other" at that time.

3 For a discussion of the perception of Turks by popular writers after the fall of the Byzantium Empire, see Albrecht Classen, "Introduction," *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 14 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 1–216. For a discussion of the way Muslim characters were used in conversion narratives as virtuous figures against which to compare sinful Christians, see Paul T. Levin, "From 'Saracen Scourge' to 'Terrible Turk': Medieval, Renaissance, and Enlightenment Images of the 'Other' in the Narrative Construction of Europe," Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 2007, 12–14; and Albrecht Classen, "Confrontation with the Foreign World of the East: Saracen Princesses in Medieval German Narratives," *Orbis Litterarum* 53 (1998): 277–95. Also helpful are the essays in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other*, ed. David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

4 I will cite line numbers from Thomas Hahn's edition *Sir Gawain* (see note 1).

Ultimately, Gawain agrees to participate in this fateful competition regardless of the grave consequences that normally would lead to physical as well as possibly spiritual death. In no way consciously aware that the beheading game could represent a profound mystical experience, such as, for instance, a ritual reenactment to confront death, or a profoundly deadly experience, such as slaughter of a stranger in the middle of Arthur's hall, Gawain undertakes this new challenge as any duty-bound chivalric knight would, believing with all those around him that "the man-at-arms sublimated the horrors of physical destruction, especially the mutilation and ruin in combat of the human body."⁵ We lack the passages describing the beheading, but the passages that follow make clear that, as always in these beheading contests, Gawain's blow doesn't kill the Turke. At this point Gawain realizes that the rules of the game have changed: Gawain has to pledge on his honor to accompany the Turke on an adventure before he may receive his return blow. Although Huizinga's game theory, as we have seen earlier in this volume, holds that these competitions are free from the forces and structures that normally control human life, or in Victoria Weiss's words "gratuitous amusement with no long-term consequences," a beheading game pushes the limits of what is acceptable as chivalric brutality conceptualized as courtly play.⁶

Still, Gawain lives in a society that understands, as Huizinga explains, that excellence must be made manifest and competition is the best way to demonstrate publically the superior qualities of a person, not valuing to the same extent virtue as an abstract moral perfection.⁷ Therefore, Gawain does not object. With the heavy use of words associated with honor, loyalty, and physical competition, Gawain's first response to the Turke shows us the way he perceives his place in the world:

My truth I plight,
I dare goe with thee full right,

5 Carl Grey Martin, "The Cipher of Chivalry: Violence as Courtly Play in the World of *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight*," *The Chaucer Review* 43.3 (2009): 311–29; here 311.

6 Victoria L. Weiss, "The Play World and the Real World: Chivalry in 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,'" *Philological Quarterly* 72 (1993): 403–18; here 410. See the discussions of Gawain's character in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, who is challenged in the same way this Gawain is and behaves much as this Gawain does in terms of the beheading game: Carl Grey Martin, "The Cipher of Chivalry (see note 5); and Thomas L. Reed, Jr., "'Bope Blysse and Blunder': 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight' and the Debate Tradition," *The Chaucer Review* 23.2 (Fall 1988): 140–61.

7 Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (1938; London: Routledge, 1998), 63.

And never from the flye;
 I will never flee from noe adventure,
 Justing, nor noe other turnament,
 Whilest I may live on lee. (Hahn 42–47)

Gawain understands the importance of honoring his word as a key element in the structure of the medieval aristocracy.⁸ Having sworn to obey the Turke, he must keep to the agreement regardless of the consequences, this being crucial for his sense of self-worth as a chivalrous Christian knight. Lee Patterson points out in *Chaucer and the Subject of History*, however, that “the term ‘honor’ became its own verbal symbol, a shorthand for motives that would not bear further inspection,” and here Gawain’s perception of honor is limited to being seen to keep his word, to holding his own in tournaments, and to speak courteously.⁹ As is usually the case, he assumes that, as a knight, his duty on this journey will be to compete in jousts or other aristocratic tournaments. More than eager to display his martial skills in this atmosphere of structure and pageantry, Gawain cannot even envision shaming himself and the Round Table he represents by refusing to take part in these contests. His preparations for the journey are those shown repeatedly in chivalric literature—readying his armor and his steed. Only later does he learn that he must leave these symbols of chivalry and noble superiority behind him to compete in the Turke’s games.

Early on the journey, Gawain is disturbed by the discourteous way he is being treated, complaining of great hunger: “thou may none of these vittells spare,/ And here is soe great plentye” (90–91) until the Turke reminds him of the inhospitable treatment he had received at Arthur’s court where no one showed any concern for the Turke’s needs as a guest. As in other late romances such as the *Weddyng of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnell* and *Gamelyn*, this work is ready to expose, according to Colleen Donnelly, the aristocratic class’s dedication to rituals and behaviors – games – that really do not matter, a concern for the physical trappings of chivalry without the ideal behavior, such as gener-

⁸ The research on the importance of an oath during the Middle Ages is extensive. All books on chivalry cover the topic. See, for instance, Maurice Keen, *English Society in the Later Middle Ages, 1348–1500* (London: Penguin Books, 1990); Maurice Keen, *Origins of the English Gentleman: Heraldry, Chivalry And Gentility In Medieval England, C.1300–c.1500* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, and Charleston, SC: Tempus, 2002); Ralph J. Hexter, *Equivocal Oaths and Ordeals in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975); J. Douglas Canfield, *Word as Bond in English Literature from the Middle Ages to the Restoration* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press, 1989).

⁹ Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 173–74.

osity and compassion for others, that should be at its core.¹⁰ Carl Grey Martin takes the criticism of chivalry masking bad behavior even further: “Chivalry allowed aristocratic brutality to assume rarified forms (honor, prowess, fealty).”¹¹ As Gawain repeatedly in the tales turns first to courtesy to resolve conflicts, Hahn says he is the figure who ensures that the “rituals that organize social meaning prevail,” but these rituals increasingly serve to mask a society that has lost its way.¹² Putting Sir Gawain to the test, thus, leads to a profound assessment of late secularized medieval society he represents where service to the king replaced service to God.¹³ The poem illustrates an aristocracy whose values are questionable in the late fifteenth century, and the games in which Gawain must prove himself are nothing like the familiar chivalric contests of the past, themselves nostalgic remnants of an earlier time. Although each challenge that follows is also referred to as a game by his ultimate opponent, the evil King of Man, Gawain is, as with the beheading, once again facing deadly challenges disguised as play, but the work presents very different types of deadly challenges.

When giants threaten to smash a brass ball too large for a human to hold, however, tennis becomes a deadly game. On the other hand, the other two “games,” while equally dangerous, would never be allowed in aristocratic play: lifting a massive chimney full of burning fire and wrestling one’s opponent into a boiling pot of lead.¹⁴ The Turke understands in a way Gawain does not that these games have a corporeal reality outside of the safe space of game and that beneath the refined surface of the chivalric world lies a material realm foreign to Gawain; therefore, the Turke steps in each time to aid Gawain before he would have otherwise miserably failed at these deadly games.

10 Collen Donnelly, “Aristocratic Veneer and the Substance of Verbal Bonds in ‘The Weddyng of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnell,’ and ‘Gamelyn,’” *Studies in Philology* 94.3 (Summer 1997): 321–44. Also see Claire Sponsler, “Society’s Image: Estates Literature in Fifteenth-century England,” *Semiotica* 63.1–2 (1987): 229–38.

11 Carl Grey Martin, *The Cipher of Chivalry* (see note 5), 311.

12 Thomas Hahn, *Sir Gawain* (see note 1), 25.

13 Mary Flowers Braswell, “The Search for the Holy Grail: Arthurian Lacunae in the England of Edward III,” *Studies in Philology* 108.4 (2011): 469–87.

14 Erik Kooper notes the similarity between these challenges and those in an Old French Charlemagne tale, *Pelerinage de Charlemagne*, though it is unlikely that the *Turke* is directly derived from this tale. Kooper speculates that both may be derived from an older story about a king who visits a rival in the underworld. Erik Kooper, “The Turke and Gowin,” *The Arthurian Encyclopedia*, ed. Norris J. Lacy (New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1986; rpt. New York: Garland Publishers, 1986), 584–85.

Tennis

Tennis seems to have become by the late fifteenth century another way for young noble men not only to entertain themselves, but also to prove their strength, agility, and cunning. From its beginnings in French monasteries as a safe and secluded game for monks to play, tennis appeared to represent another form of tournament play, itself a stylized version of the battlefield according to Heiner Gillmeister in his authoritative work on the cultural history of tennis.¹⁵ With similarities to siege warfare, the antagonist attempts to force his ball into a grill in the wall or some other place to score points, and the defender tries to volley the ball until it drops into a spot favorable to him (see Fig. 1). Having been sent to monasteries to be educated, the sons of the aristocracy brought their love of the game home with them, thus, bringing the game out into the open, and making a lot of trouble according to the various complaints from clerical and secular sources in a number of communities.¹⁶

The complaints about and ordinances outlawing the playing of tennis during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries can be explained by the fierce aggression and raucous way that the game was played. A Tamworth Court Roll of 1424 declares that a tennis player could be imprisoned and be forced to pay £20 to the bailiffs if caught playing the game (405, note 104). In 1396 the very first use of the word “tennis,” in fact, in England appears when a citizen is summoned to Burghmote for letting people play “le closhe” and “le Tennis” in his house in Canterbury. In his personal records, a fifteenth-century mayor of Exeter explains the nature of the quarrel between him and the community with the dean and chapter of Exeter Cathedral in 1447–1450 over use of the cloisters next to the Cathedral. The Dean had locked the doors to the cloisters to keep the public out, especially young people in town who played unlawful games there, damaging windows and soiling the walls. The Dean was no longer going to tolerate the youths who “exercised unlawfull games as the toppe, queke (a board game), penny prykke and most att tenys” (27). Playing tennis was the worst offence.

¹⁵ I am indebted to this invaluable work for the definitive history of medieval tennis: Heiner Gillmeister, *Tennis: A Cultural History* 2nd ed. (Bristol, CT: Equinox, 2017). 1st ed. published as *Kulturgeschichte des Tennis* (Zürich: Fretz, 1990). Also see Terry Todd *The Tennis Players from Pagan Rites to Strawberries and Cream* (Guernsey: Vallency Press, 1979); Robert William Henderson, *Ball, Bat and Bishop: The Origin of Ball Games* (New York: Rockport Press, 1947); Malcolm D. Whitman, *Tennis: Origins and Mysteries* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004); Lance St John Butler and P. J. Wordie, *The Royal Game* (Stirling: Falkland Palace Real Tennis Club, 1989); John Arlott, *The Oxford Companion to Sports and Games* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

¹⁶ I cite page numbers within the text from Heiner Gillmeister, *Tennis* (see note 15), 31.



Fig. 1: Early Portrayal of Tennis. MS M.456. *Aviz aus roys.*, fol. 68v. France, 1347–1350. The Morgan Library & Museum. MS M.456. Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913) in 1911

In another fifteenth-century complaint, 1451 in the parish of Ottery St Mary, the Bishop of Exeter, Edmund Lacy, chastised the canons of the church for starting a tennis league in the precincts of the church. He calls it an evil game that was being played on feast days on consecrated burial ground as at a fair or theatre. They voice vain, heinous, and blasphemous words and curses that lead to squabbles, disputes, brawls, and battles by words. He complains that they tore down a wooden piece on the roof of a building in the churchyard because it had blocked their shots. He threatened them with excommunication (29). Tennis, thus, sounds like the perfect game not only for giants to play, but also for nobles and kings.

Although some educational treatises for princes at the time recommended tennis as an appropriate activity for royal children, including Christine de Pizan's *The Book of Body Politic* written between 1404–1407, a number of royals embraced the sport so enthusiastically that they actually died in circumstances connected to tennis: French King Louis X died when, after an intense tennis match,

he retired to a shady grotto and drank chilled wine to quench his terrible thirst (16). Scottish King James I died in 1437 according to John Shirley when he tried to escape from attackers by diving into his privy, which he had just had bricked up to stop the tennis balls on his tennis court from rolling in it (18). And then there is King Charles VIII of France, who in 1498 died when he hit his head on a lintel while watching an exciting game of tennis in the moat of his castle (18). Evidence for the popularity of tennis with fifteenth-century royals and nobles comes from the household expenses rolls which list gambling debts. Gambling over tennis matches was common, which led to some of the quarrelsome behavior referred to earlier. King Henry VII's gambling on his own tennis games cost him a fair amount of money in the 1490s, including having to pay up after losing not only to lords such as Somerset and Curson, but also to his servants (19). The king was not the only person paying for tennis losses: The Duke of Norfolk (Sir John Howard) was billed in 1464 for a loss in tennis to Sir Robert Chamberley (376, n 59).

The ball the King of the Isle of Man has his giants play with is made of solid brass. Although this seems like a fantasy element, the actual balls used in medieval tennis were large and dangerous weapons themselves. One source says that in England before the 1500s balls were made of leather filled with clay, sand and powdered egg shells and could take out an opponent, though we also know of balls with leather covers filled with human or animal hair.¹⁷ The ball in fifteenth-century Germany was made of a lump of lead covered in stocking wool and then wrapped in leather (202).

What did the players do with these monster balls? With the game space and rules quite unlike those that developed later for lawn tennis, the court in Royal Tennis or Real Tennis, as it is called today, was made up of a cloistered space with a roof on one side and, ideally, a gallery with a grill at one end though each space was different (see Fig. 2). A player from the side defending the gallery space on the court “served the ball with his hand, there being no racquets in medieval tennis, onto the slanting roof to his left where it dropped onto the playing area of the opposing team. This team tried to hit the gallery in front of them or sometimes planks or recesses high up on the walls [with their return], a strike [onto one of these spots] being worth one or more points. The defenders of the galleries ... did their best to prevent this, by hitting back, either on the volley or on the rebound, every ball that entered the gallery. ... The rally continued until either the gallery was hit or the grill or the ball bounced a second time” (35–36). If it did bounce twice, the ball had to be quickly stopped from rolling and that

17 <http://www.royaltenniscourt.com> (last accessed Sept. 12, 2018).



Fig. 2: Top: Playing Tennis. Bottom: Other Forms of Amusement. © The British Library Board. *Les Fais et les Dis des Romains et de autres gens*. Harley MS 4375, fol. 151v

spot marked, which was called the chase. The teams changed ends and the attacking team had to get a chase beyond their opponents' to score. Arguments over the length of the chases were sometimes violent, and there was no net to keep opposing players at a distance from each other. Balls ricocheted wildly and rapidly off the walls in all directions and stopping the ball involved diving

back and forth to halt it immediately, so usually those on the team with less prestige or age were chosen to do this (32).

The game's similarity to military campaigns was well noted at the time by nobles and poets. A continuation written in 1419 of a fourteenth-century prose version of the *Brut* is the first to retell the battle of Agincourt in 1415 in terms of tennis. The French Dauphin sent Henry V a "tonne full of teneys-ballis," because, he said, the young and tender English king was better suited to playing with tennis balls than fighting a war in France. A furious Henry V vowed in turn to send "harde and grete gunne-stonys" for the Dauphin to play with. The work goes on to describe the barrage of Harfleur as a tennis match (110–11). Later, a minstrel made a popular ballad sometime after 1419 called *The Batayle of Agyncourt* in which Henry V vows that his tennis balls will "tere the roof all of his [h]all," the Dauphin's (112–13). The story continues into the next generation when Henry's great victory on the tennis court is celebrated in John Audelay's 1420s carol written for Henry VI (116). Even in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, the Dauphin insults Henry by sending him tennis balls.

In the fifteenth century, therefore, tennis matches were connected in the popular imagination with chivalric battles, and British kings claiming to be King Arthur's descendants frequently played tennis with their courtiers and other European royals. Just as tournaments and jousts had earlier medieval tennis allowed a young man to prove himself physically strong, determined, and clever in a public theater of extravagant gesture. Medieval tennis would have suited the provincial audience when *The Turke* was composed around 1500 better than archaic contests that were by that time being staged and scripted to feature the upper class wearing costumes. Although Gawain still expects to unhorse opponents in his armor on his horse when he leaves the court, he is instead faced with playing tennis using a giant brass ball lobbed at him by a riot of giants.

Giants

Giants are, on the surface, unusual opponents to find on a tennis court, and especially on a medieval tennis court. Known from Augustine's writings as large creatures that relied on brute strength and violence and were unable to compromise, feel remorse, or use self-knowledge to form a community with others, they were used allegorically to represent the effects of sin.¹⁸ According to Sylvia Huot

18 Augustine discusses the origin and characteristics of giants in ch. 23 of *De civitate Dei*. I use

in her influential study *Outsiders: The Humanity and Inhumanity of Giants in Medieval French Prose Romance*, they are “incapable of social organization, negotiation or rule of law,” which would appear to rule out sports and games.¹⁹ From another perspective, though, focusing on what fighting a giant reflects about the knight, Jeffrey J. Cohen says that when a noble knight fought giants, “overcoming the giant became a way for the young knight to demonstrate that he had overcome the monster within, that he could control his body sexually and martially.”²⁰ Dana M. Oswald agrees, stating that the giant “acts as a mirror to humanity and to human desires, possessing bodies that are under-civilized and over-determined.”²¹ Medieval giants, therefore, according to recent scholarship, are not simply “other.” As Cohen argues, they “resemble the personified sin of Gluttony; with their gross, ingestive corporeality, they threaten to devour any identity produced through a disciplined regime.”²² One identity created by a regime that giants can destroy is the nobility’s, according to Huot. Giants can pose a political threat in that the giant can represent a challenge to aristocratic power by “an overly ambitious middle class” as well as the rejection of the feudal order.²³ In this sense, therefore, we can see Gawain, the representative of the noble knight, needing to demonstrate the self-control expected of aristocratic young men while giants are challenging the whole basis of his society. Serving

the English translation Augustine, *The City of God – De Civitate Dei*. 2 vols. vol. 2, ed. Ernest Barker and R. V. G. Tasker (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1947).

19 Sylvia Huot, *Outsiders: The Humanity and Inhumanity of Giants in Medieval French Prose Romance* Conway Lectures in Medieval Studies. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016).

20 Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages Conceptions of Giants in the Popular Imagination* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 32.

21 Dana M. Oswald, *Monsters, Gender, and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), 160. Also see Sarah Sheehan, “Giants, Boar-hunts, and Barbering: Masculinity in *Culhwch ac Olwen*,” *Arthuriana* 15.3 (Fall 2005): 3–25; Walter B. Stephens, *Giants in Those Days: Folklore, Ancient History, and Nationalism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989); Mary Kate Hurley explains that “by their fantastic and sometimes grotesque difference from humans, monsters serve as a boundary to what can and cannot be considered human and demonstrate the rules and practices that create humanity,” “Monsters,” *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, vol. 2, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 1167–83; here 1167.

22 Jeffrey Cohen, *Of Giants* (see note 20), 205. Not all giants in medieval literature are antagonistic. See, for example, Lorenzo Lozzi Gallo, “The Giantess as Foster-Mother in Old Norse Literature,” *Scandinavian Studies* 78.1 (Spring 2006): 1–20; see also Tina Marie Boyer, *The Giant Hero in Medieval Literature*. Explorations in Medieval Culture, 2 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016).

23 Sylvia Hout, *Outsiders* (see note 19), 73–74 and 80.

as figures of human excess, as well as impeding the formation of social and individual identity, giants are fitting opponents in Arthurian literature.

Going back to the earliest biography of Arthur, Geoffrey of Monmouth, in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* (1136) (*History of the Kings of Britain*) uses giants in a foundational myth describing the way at Brutus's arrival they had to drive giants into the caves of mountains before later killing them.²⁴ Giants are used in Geoffrey's *Historia*, then, to establish that Arthur's realm is a place whose past is shadowed by ancient destructive forces that always lurk in the background, but a strong warrior like Arthur can vanquish them. Most of the giants that Arthur finds during his travels elsewhere are hideous, grotesque fiends, the Spanish giant at St. Michael's Mount who has raped and eaten Helena, the Duchess of Brittany, perhaps the most memorable.²⁵ If we turn to art, one giant most familiar to us from the Arthurian manuscripts is the one in a horrible picture of Arthur finding the Spanish giant with the blood of Helena dripping from his mouth while roasting a pig, found in a continuation of Wace's the *Brut* from the second quarter of the fourteenth century²⁶ (see Fig. 3).

Interestingly, however, the pictures of giants in the fifteenth century attest to a transformation in the way that giants are perceived. In the pictures accompanying fifteenth-century works from the Arthurian Legends, the giants are shown as simply large humans, not savage ogres or beasts wielding clubs. In a copy of Geoffrey's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (1400–1425) (top half of Harley MS 1808, fol. 30), we see combat between Brutus's troops and the giants of Albion led by Gogmagog. These giants are dressed in contemporary clothing much like the clothes the workers building the city below are wearing. They just seem to

24 Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote his chronicle in Latin *Historia Regum Britanniae* (1136) (*History of the Kings of Britain*), which provided the basic outline of King Arthur's life and rule. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The Historia regum Britannie*, ed. Julia C. Crick (Cambridge: Brewer, 1989).

25 This incident is first told in Geoffrey's *Historia*, added to by Wace and Lagamon, and then continued in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* (1400) before being expanded in Malory's *Morte Darthur*. Her identity changes from niece of Hoelus, to Elaine, to Helene, to Duchess of Brittany. She survives the giant's advances in the earlier works. Valerie Krishna, *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition* (New York: B. Franklin, 1976). Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur: Sir Thomas Malory's Book of King Arthur and of His Noble Knights of the Round Table*. (Lawrence, KS: Digireads.com Publishing, 2009).

26 A Norman writer working at the court of Eleanor of Aquitaine, Wace expanded on Geoffrey's *Historia* and introduced the Celtic matter into French with his 1155 *Roman de Brut*. Wace, *Le Roman De Brut: The French Book of Brutus*, ed. Arthur Wayne Glowka. *Medieval Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 279 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval Renaissance Texts and Studies, 2005). Chroniclers added prose continuations to his work sometimes up to the mid-fifteenth century. This picture of Arthur and the giant is found in Wace's continuation of the *Brut* 1325–1350.



Fig. 3: Arthur Fighting the Spanish Giant. © The British Library Board. Wace's Continuation of *The Brut* 1325–1350. MS British Library Egerton 3208, fol.49r

be tall. In another context it would be hard to recognize them as giants (see Fig. 4). Two other paintings from the fifteenth century also show this reconfiguration of Arthur's giants: One is a miniature of Arthur slaying the swine-eating Spanish giant on Mont St. Michel painted by the Master of London Wavrin (*Chronique D'Angleterre* BL MS Royal 15, EIV). In vivid contrast to the fourteenth-century painting where the giant has animal ears, a very large nose, and a hairy face, we see here a very large knight wearing armor like Arthur's (see Fig. 5). The other fifteenth-century painting of Arthur killing the Spanish giant, this found in the Lambeth Palace *St. Albans Chronicles* again shows the giant dressed in almost identical armor and looking every bit human, although



Fig. 4: Brutus's Troops Fight the Giants of Albion Led by Gogmagog. © The British Library Board. Geoffrey of Monmouth Historical miscellany, Brutus Harley MS 1808 fol. 30v



Fig. 5: Arthur Fights the Spanish Giant on Mont St. Michel. © The British Library Board *Chroniques d'Angleterre*. Royal 15 E. IV fol.156r

carrying an exotic scimitar sword (see Fig. 6).²⁷ Arthur seems in these late medieval pictures to be battling a larger version of himself or of the noble society he has formed.

When we turn to the poem again, the giants in *The Turke* are bound to an evil king and carry out the orders of this character known as The King of Man on the Isle of Man. If these giants outline the boundary of what it means to be human or, here, not human, what separates them from our ideal view of humans is the great pleasure they take as they revel in their physical nature, showing here less the need to control their sexual appetites as their love for violence:

There were seventeen giants bold of blood,
And all thought Gawaine but litle good.
When they thought with him to play.
All the giants thoughten then
To have stricke out Sir Gawaines braine. (181–85)

²⁷ I am indebted to Alan Murray, University of Leeds, for pointing out the differences between Arthur's and the giant's swords. A scimitar is appropriate for a late fifteenth-century giant to carry.



Fig. 6: Arthur Fights Spanish Giant with Scimitar. Lambeth Palace Library/Courtauld Institute. Arthur Fights the Spanish Giant. St Albans Chronicle MS 6 fol. 62v-[2]

The tennis game lays heavily on the Turke's mind throughout the quest, the only specific thing he warns Gawain about ahead of time being the tennis ball, saying:

"Thou shalt see a tenisse ball
That never knight in Arthurs hall
Is able to give it a lout." (140–42)

As the match is about to begin, the brass ball is again described in this way: "The ball of brasse was made for the giants hand; / There was noe man in all England / Were able to carry it ..." (187–89). At this point, the manuscript breaks off, so the details about the match can only be imagined. We do know, however, that Gawain's team wins the match through the efforts of his guide, the formulaic hyperbole describing the brass ball having apparently been accurate in this case.

This representative of the ideal Christian knight cannot win a tennis match against an evil king. The one response we have from Gawain when he meets the King of Man is the conventional reply a “venturous” knight makes when invited to sit down to eat:

[Gawain] Saith, “Nay, that may not be,
I trow not a venturous knight shall
Sitt downe in a kings hall
Adventures or you see.” (168–71)

Refusing to eat until an adventure unfolds, he is hoping the usual gracious behavior he always relies on in tough situations will suffice. Luckily for him, however, he has the Turke on his team because his courteous behavior and tournament skills will not help him now. Furthermore, Gawain also does not have the aptitude and abilities necessary to win the last two games – lifting a burning furnace and wrestling to throw an opponent into a pot of boiling lead. During the whole game section all we hear of Gawain is that he is said to be terrified, to pray silently to God before the Turke lifts the chimney for him, and to deem his opponent the keenest giant in any country. These are not the responses of the usual chivalric knight to challenges. Once these games have ended, his team having won thanks to the Turke, Gawain steps up to play his conventional role to reconcile “the other” with King Arthur’s court: “Then Sir Gawaine unto the King can say,/ “Without thou wilt agree unto our law,/ Eatein is all thy bread” (259–60). Not surprisingly, the King of Man is not interested in following Arthur’s laws, and reacts to Gawain’s gracious offer by ungraciously spitting on him, which leads the Turke to finish off this evil king in a sensible way; he “flang” him into the fire (64).²⁸

Gawain’s only real duty in these tests has been to trust absolutely in his guide. Although the original intention is said to be for Gawain to win the games, to perform the physical tasks to prove himself worthy, the Turke is the one who can and does perform them. Gawain is a spectator to a battle between the King of Man and the Turke in which we see the dual nature of the medieval chivalric world, at once operating in a legitimate arena of controlled violence while under the veneer rages the destructive world of monstrous giants. Having witnessed lessons given by his guide on generosity, service, and humility, the inner qualities a fifteenth-century aristocrat should ideally possess, Gawain is

²⁸ This scene echoes those in Charlemagne narratives such as *The Sowdone of Babylon*, where the head Saracen when offered baptism spits into the baptismal font and is immediately beheaded.

ready to end the games and fulfill his initial oath—allowing the Turke to cut off his head.²⁹ However, the Turke has one more lesson for Gawain, this time a spiritual one, and he insists that Gawain behead him once again instead of Gawain being beheaded as had been agreed upon in the original game. This time Gawain is to catch the character's blood in a gold basin, which has echoes of the spiritual mysteries of the Grail and the Eucharist since, according to Robert de Boron in *The Queste del Saint Graal*, Joseph of Arimathea collected Christ's blood on the cross with the grail cup used at the Last Supper.³⁰ Although Gawain at first refuses to cut off his guide's head, he agrees after the Turke reminds Gawain of his chivalric duties: "If ever I did anything for thee, / Do for me in this stead" (272–73). As soon as Gawain upholds the bargain by slicing off his head, blood from the Turke pours out into the basin, and the Turke transforms into the Christian knight Sir Gromer.³¹ Both the transformation and conversion enacted here have roots in folk tales and earlier romances but with shades of difference. When other Arthurian characters are transformed, they claim, as does Ragnelle in *The Marriage of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnelle* that they have been turned back into their true forms after having had their identities changed against their will, but there is no suggestion here that the Turke had originally been Sir Gromer.³² Instead we have a new individual with the virtues, wisdom, energy, and skills necessary to lead a newly formed Christian society on the Isle of Man. At the same time, the conversion of a Turk into a Christian had been a familiar narrative in Europe going back at least to the period of the Crusader romances, or *chansons de geste* and was likely given increasing attention after the Ottoman Turks' military successes in the second half of the fifteenth century.³³ As with the Green Knight in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, however, this Turke is described from the beginning rather ambiguously. He is first said to be a "burne" (12 warrior) and to be built "like a Turke" (14), but then undergoes a series of transformations from to a "Turke" (34), to a "boy" (149), to "Gawain's Boy" (219), to "Sir Gromer" (320) before being crowned King of Man. It is our view

29 These are the same lessons that Gawain learns in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

30 Robert, *Joseph of Arimathea: A Romance of the Grail*, ed. Jean Rogers (London: Steiner, 1990).

31 As a result of this beheading, many Christian prisoners being held on the Isle of Man are also freed as they are in a number of Arthurian works.

32 In this I disagree with Thomas Hahn, who states that the Turke is changed *back* into Sir Gromer after the beheading, *Sir Gawain* (see note 1), 356, n 271. I instead see Sir Gromer as a universal man, King of the Isle of Man. The *OED* cites 'groom' spelled "grom" to mean 'man' as early as 1330. The name appears as Sir Gromer Somer Joure in *Ragnelle* and Sir Gromore Somyr Ioure in Malory. Thomas Hahn also included *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnelle* in his collection of Gawain tales *Sir Gawain* (see note 1), 47–80.

33 See note 3 for scholarship already cited on the topic of conversion narratives.

of him that changes as the adventures unfold, and not his own character. As a Turk, he is patently different from the chivalric knights that populate King Arthur's realm and, on occasion, in fact, their enemy, but as an outsider he is able to point to the underlying truths masked by noble celebrations, courtly behavior, and chivalric games.

When Sir Gromer is made the new sovereign ruler of the Isle of Man, at Gawain's insistence, saying Gromer had earned it and he himself had "never purposed to be noe King" (326), he is taking on the eminent position held from 1405 on by the Stanleys when Henry IV bestowed it upon John Stanley (ca. 1350–1414), the Stanley family hailing from the North West Midlands region where this romance was composed. Thomas Hall has argued that Sir John Stanley could stand as a "paragon of chivalric ideals and achievement," having served as a knight including a post at the court of the Grand Turk, and spending the last decade of his life as steward of the king's household.³⁴ Four generations of Stanleys had served the reigning royals by the time this work was probably composed, and Henry VII's stepson, Thomas, Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby (ca. 1435–1504), made Earl of Derby after the Stanley family gave Henry Tudor valuable support at Bosworth Field, was probably the King or Lord of Man at that time. Known for withholding troops or changing allegiances when it seemed politically wise, this King of the Isle of Man was not known as a paragon of virtue and truth. The Stanleys were, though, honored and favored by all of the royal rulers during the tumultuous fifteenth century, serving the avid tennis players of the Lancaster, York, and Tudor dynasties.

With the unusual blending of ancient folktales, established European narratives, and contemporary concerns, this work did not simply give us another retelling of a Gawain tale. Instead, the author brings in the anxieties of the day and works through them in the context of games. The growing power of independent nobles who took on almost royal powers and their ever-shifting allegiances that characterized the aristocratic lords of the fifteenth century would have made it all but impossible to look with naive nostalgia at British royals of the past as anything different. At the same time, religious divisions were brought to the forefront on a global scale by the expanding Muslim empire and the European need to come to terms with this economic force for trade.

³⁴ Thomas Hahn, *Sir Gawain* (see note 1), 34. Michael J. Bennett discusses the successes of the Stanley family as representative of the growing power and influence gained through knighthood in *Community, Class and Careerism: Cheshire and Lancashire Society in the Age of "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); id., "'Good Lords' and 'King Makers': The Stanleys of Lathom in English Politics, 1385–1485," *History Today* 31 (1981): 12–17.

On the more immediate scene, religious divisions were fostered in England by calls for reform by Wycliffe and others.

Games, as we know, mimic life; they allow us to reflect on strategies of winning and consequences of winning and losing. When Gawain impulsively agreed to play games here, he clearly had a superficial understanding of what was expected of him. Why would any decent knight agree to kill someone by beheading him simply to provide entertainment for his king? By the end of his adventure Gawain is able to appreciate the value of even an alien figure's life, not wanting to follow the rules of the game anymore that would require him to chop off the Turke's head for the second time. However, as it was at the beginning of this adventure, the final game is much more profound than Gawain understands, and sticking to the rules laid out at the beginning of the game allows everyone to win.

We know from game theory that games have little grounding in reality and that they provide a free space in which participants can explore their own beliefs, abilities, and weaknesses in a setting specifically designed to test these exact qualities without horrible outcomes. As Johan Huizinga explains, "Though play as such is outside the range of good and bad, the element of tension imparts to it a certain ethical value in so far as it means a testing of the player's prowess; his courage, tenacity, resources and, last but not least, his spiritual powers."³⁵ As we have seen, the games in this work do not underscore Gawain's prowess, which is what he had expected, but instead emphasize his spiritual emptiness. In earlier periods, according to Huizinga, the nobility lived up to their ideal of honor only by bravely vindicating their honor in feats of war. Later on, perhaps we might say by the fifteenth century, they had to incorporate higher standards of ethics and spirituality into their code of life or live a charade.³⁶

A player's understanding of the rules of the game can, therefore, give insights into culture and character. It is clear from their acceptance of the beheading game that Arthur's court values contests demonstrating physical prowess over potential loss of life. Gawain thinks the same old rules will apply and that the same old strategies will work when he leaves Arthur's court to play games with the Turke, but nothing could be further from the truth. Interestingly enough, here Gawain cannot win any of the games! Despite the accolades at the beginning of the poem, he is an ineffective Arthurian knight, and his inability to win is what he needs to learn. Although the text suggests that he has discovered what true gentility is through interacting with the Turke, his helplessness when

³⁵ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (see note 7), 11.

³⁶ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (see note 7), 65.

confronted by evil is evident in his feeble responses to the threats posed by the King of Man's games. Without the support and intervention of his guide, Gawain would have been dead both physically and spiritually. Finally, games like these in literature show how important learning through experience is. Because Gawain has experienced these tests, even just in a game, he has comprehended this message on human weakness in a much more significant way than anyone hearing about it at court.

Again, we learn from Huizinga that the outcome of a game is really only of interest to those who play it, and we can see the truth of this here and in the fourteenth century *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.³⁷ At the ending of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* the courtiers laugh at Gawain's shame, wanting to wear a garter like his for fun. Here in *The Turke*, Arthur tries to proclaim Gawain as the King of the Isle of Man, having missed the clear message about his favorite knight's flaws. Gawain understands, though, and he says to make Sir Gromer the king because he had earned it. The Isle of Man is not annexed into Arthur's kingdom at the end but remains a sovereign territory under the rule of a truly chivalric Christian king who can do many things, including playing tennis with giants.

³⁷ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (see note 7), 49.

Sharon Diane King

“J’ai tiré si près / Que je touche au but”: Ludic Roots, Spiritual Play in Marguerite de Navarre’s *L’Inquisiteur*

The theological background of many of Queen Marguerite de Navarre’s (1492–1549) plays has been well scrutinized, especially in light of her deep association with – and protection of – numerous theologians, scholars, translators, and poets connected to the new teaching of the *Réforme* in France, including Lefèvre d’Étaples, Guillaume Briçonnet, Clément Marot, and Bonaventure des Périers.¹ Yet there have been fewer explorations of the games and performative or ludic connections presented in her multitonal farce *L’Inquisiteur* (1534–ca. 1536). My aim in this paper is to tease out several strands of “play” within this curious but moving theatrical piece, aiming for a deeper understanding of Marguerite’s theological and artistic goals. For in this work, “the play’s the thing,” catching not merely the conscience and soul of the eponymous title character, but redeeming the joy of play and performance itself.

L’Inquisiteur, termed a “farce” but perhaps more aptly described as a short drama with a happy resolution, is a work *sui generis* in myriad ways. Perhaps nowhere more acutely focused is this uniqueness than in the cruel, overpowering character of the Grand Inquisitor himself, who serves both as protagonist and villain.² It seems Marguerite had no shortage of real-life inquisitorial inspirations

¹ See Jonathan A. Reid, “Marguerite de Navarre and Evangelical Reform,” *A Companion to Marguerite de Navarre*, ed. Gary Ferguson and Mary B. McKinley. Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition, 42 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 36–37, 48–49; see also Cathleen Corrie, “Marguerite de Navarre’s *L’Inquisiteur*: The Way is Simplicity Itself,” *Christianity and Literature* 52.4 (Summer 2003): 471–95.

² The plot, briefly: in early sixteenth-century France, the chief officer of the Inquisition rails against the upstart Reformist religious teachings and practices, threatening destruction to all who dare defy his will. Restless, he quarrels with his servant, then goes outside and confronts children innocently playing games. He reproaches them for wasting time on profitless amusements, but his arguments are countered by their bold answers and joyful song. His servant is won over by the children’s faith; eventually the Inquisitor himself, softened by the simple words of the youngest child, abandons his cruel persecutions, and commits himself to a new path of humility and peace.

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to draw from,³ though since the play's date is uncertain⁴ and there is no verifiable performance history, any specific link to a contemporary Inquisitor continues to be open to conjecture.⁵ It would seem more likely that it is the office of the Inquisitor itself, with its far-reaching, venal, and unrestrained power embodied in a conjectured character, which was the queen's true inspiration.⁶ Yet the author still managed to create a real, multilayered, human character,⁷ horrifically flawed and yet – showcasing her theological point – ultimately capable of being redeemed. The process by which this redemption occurs, however, highlights another unusual aspect of this theatrical text: it is a direct consequence of the Grand Inquisitor's opposition to, and discomfiture with, children engaged in games nearby. It is the children's innocent courage to defend their play in the face of his wrath, their unbounded joy and song in the midst of his threats, which prompt the Inquisitor's repentance and conversion to their teachings about divine love and human access to it. Their play is literally the hook that brings him to God.

I will begin my analysis of ludic associations by situating this play within Marguerite's own œuvre, specifically in regards to her chief narrative, the *Hep-*

3 That the Inquisition was working within France at this time is well established, if less infamous than its Spanish counterpart. Contemporary templates for the Queen for the role of Inquisitor would have included Jean de Roma, Etienne Mangon, Louis de Rochette, and Matthieu Orry, and possibly even Arnaud de Badet. See *Marguerite de Navarre: Théâtre Profane*, ed. V. L. Saulnier. Textes littéraires français, 3 (Geneva: Droz, 1963), 35–41; Raymond Mentzer, *Heresy and Inquisition in Languedoc, 1510–1560* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1969), 6; Fernando Garrido and C. B. Cayley, *A History of Political and Religious Persecutions*. Vol. 2 (London: The London Printing and Publishing Company, Ltd, 1876); Richard Copley Christie, *Etienne Dolet: A Martyr of the Renaissance, 1508–1546* (London: MacMilland & Co., 1899), 408–12; Bernard Montagnes, “Un inquisiteur de Toulouse accusé d’hérésie en 1534, le dominicain Arnaud de Badet.” *Revue d’histoire de l’Église de France* 71.187 (1985): 233–51.

4 See Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Series. Vol. IV: *Théâtre* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002), 261–68.

5 *Marguerite de Navarre: Théâtre Profane*, ed. V. L. Saulnier (see note 3), 35–41; Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 4), 261–68.

6 He is also likely representative of the atmosphere of religious repression in general at the time. See Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 4), 261–65. It is my belief that Marguerite created the Inquisitor deliberately as a character of fiction to further her theological point: the *possibility* of divine grace that changes and redeems is available to all.

7 I maintain this (and have at least the evidence of having produced the play myself for a thoughtful audience) despite one early critic's comments to the contrary. See Petit de Julleville, *Histoire du théâtre en France: Répertoire du théâtre comique en France au moyen-âge* (Paris: Leopold Cerf, 1886), 76.

taméron. That games and pastimes should be the primary motif of one of Marguerite plays should come as no surprise to anyone who has read the *Heptaméron*; its entire (though fictional) *raison d'être* is the welcome escape from devastating floods by a group of noblemen and women, as they enter into the leisure activity of storytelling.⁸ The prologue of the narrative makes this point clearly. The pastime of telling tales is fondly traced back to the master of word-sport Boccaccio (vv. 339–45), evoked as a way to occupy the day joyfully amidst dire circumstances (vv. 305–08), and presented (though not without sly double-entendres) as a means by which all refugees occupy the same level playing field: "car au jeu nous sommes tous esgaux" (vv. 396–97; for at the game we are all equal).⁹ We shall revisit this equalizing quality of pastimes, as well as another worthwhile amusement which the noblewoman Oisille recommends to her fellows as a path to joy: that of singing the Psalms and canticles with heartfelt fervor (vv. 260–72).

The significance of *L'Inquisiteur* also becomes more apparent within the larger context of contemporary theater dealing with the perception and reception of games in France in that era.¹⁰ To be sure, the reception and perception of play and pastimes in the culture of the late Middle Ages and early modern period lies beyond the scope of this paper; suffice it to say that playing games was viewed with ambivalence at best, from being dismissed as laziness and profligacy, to being encouraged as a healthful exercise (even one banishing idleness!), to being denounced as one of humanity's greatest moral failings, to offering a

⁸ *Marguerite de Navarre, Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Nicole Cazauran and Sylvie Lefèvre. Vol. X: *Héptaméron*, 1 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2013), 1–18. Storytelling may occupy the place of primary pastime of the narrative, but it is hardly the only one. Within the seventy-two stories of the *Héptaméron* and the discourse that surrounds them, games and playful activities emerge as both drivers of and accidental to the plots, with predictably varied moral overlays. The fourth and tenth tales of Day I describe games as generally positive pursuits young men and princes should know and be adept at. More numerous, however, are the tales in which games and pastimes provide cover or cause for adulterous concern, either potential or real (Seventh story, Thirteenth story, Twenty-sixth story, Forty-fifth story, Fifty-ninth story) or are the locus of tricks, some also involving reprehensible behavior (Fourteenth story, Twenty-second story, Fifty-sixth story).
⁹ This great equalizer that is storytelling in this narrative may bring with it an element of protofeminism, as it does with the stories of Sheherezade and the Arabian Nights. See Somaya Sami Sabry, *Arab-American Women's Writing and Performance: Orientalism, Race and the Idea of the Arabian Nights* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 175. Hanan al-Shaykh's *One Thousand and One Nights: A Retelling* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), re-envisioning a number of the tales to show the strong, active role women play in the stories spun out by the determined narrator. See also the contribution to this volume by Sally Abed.

¹⁰ Along with other scholars of the period, I delimit the period from approximately 1450 to 1550.

mean between extremes of merriment and melancholy.¹¹ The French stage in Marguerite's era did not shy away from portraying people playing games on-stage, usually foolhardy youths occupied in games of chance in hope of gain. More often than not, such activity was cast in a negative light, though sometimes the bleakness was tempered with humor.¹²

In the allegorical farce *Les cinq sens de l'homme*,¹³ for example, the Sixth Sense crashes Man's banquet given in honor of his Five Senses,¹⁴ demanding he take his place among them; once he is chased out, the Five Senses suggest a round of games to cheer their master. But in vain do Man's lively Eyes suggest the pastimes of Hearts, Primero, Trumps, and Flush; to no avail do his grasping Hands yearn after the rolling dice, whether it be to win or lose. For Man spurns their suggestions of games of chance, opting for backgammon or checkers as such games are "plus honneste" (313, more honest). Yet Man and his Senses are thwarted even from playing those more sedate amusements when the Sixth Sense – who is, to be sure, the Arsehole – takes revenge for his banishment by shutting himself down, giving Man the world's worst case of constipation.

Our knowledge of Marguerite's exposure to sixteenth-century theater is relatively scanty, but she certainly was acquainted with civic performances of her era,¹⁵ likely attended some medieval *mystères*,¹⁶ and certainly studied newer for-

11 See Alessandro Arcangeli, *Recreation in the Renaissance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Elisabeth Belmas, *Jouer Autrefois: Essai sur le jeu dans la France moderne* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2006), especially 84–103, 187–215; Jean-Michel Mehl, *Les jeux au royaume de France du XIII au début du XVIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 311–405; Jean-Michel Mehl, "Entre culture et réalité: la perception des jeux, sports et divertissements au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance," *Il Tempo Libero, economia e società, secc. XIII–XVIII*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Florence: Le Monnier, 1995), 801–23. For more information on the history of games and playing in the early modern age, see the introductory essay by Albrecht Classen. For games, chance, and randomization as reflected in early modern French plays, see the contribution to this volume by Michael Call.

12 The comic potential of gaming emerges early in French narrative: a very popular thirteenth-century *fabliau* tells of an errant minstrel who wins his way out of hell by besting St. Peter in a game of craps. See Anonymous, *Saint Pierre et le jongleur*, in *Nouveau Recueil Complet des Fabliaux*, ed. Willem Noomen and Nico Van Den Boogaard. Vol. 1 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1983), 127–59.

13 Anonymous, *Les cinq sens de l'homme*, in *Ancien Théâtre Français*, ed. Viollet-le-Duc. Vol. III (Paris: Jannet, 1854), 300–24.

14 These stray slightly from what the current culture understands as the five, being Mouth, Eyes, Ears, Hands, and... Feet!

15 *Marguerite d'Angoulême: étude biographique et littéraire*, ed. Pierre Jourda. Bibliothèque Littéraire de la Renaissance, 19 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1930), 431–32. See also *Marguerite de Navarre, Comédies bibliques*, ed. Barbara Marczuk (Geneva: Droz, 2000), 7 et passim.

ays into biblical theater such as the *Mystère des actes des apotres*.¹⁷ We know as well that theatrical presentations of the Prodigal Son, the wastrel of biblical lore who squanders his time on the vices of games, drink, and women, seemed to have been quite popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; there are records of performances over a period of at least 80 years in France and the Low Countries, the first recorded in Ghent as early as 1458, in dumb show.¹⁸ The moralizing piece *L'enfant prodigue* was performed several times during Queen Marguerite's lifetime: in 1504 in Laval, in 1532 in Béthune, in 1538 in Cadillac-sur Garonne, and in 1539 in Limoges. Even if she did not attend these performances, it is possible, perhaps even likely, that she knew of them.¹⁹ The text of *L'enfant prodigue*²⁰ is a rather stereotypical, if elaborated, depiction of a selfish youth wasting his fortune on games of cards and dice, rich food and drink, and debauchery. It remains of interest perhaps more for its curious duo of "bad seed" characters (as if the subject needed a sidekick to make its point), actually opening with scenes of the dissipated life of bon vivant character "L'Enfant gâté" (The Spoiled Child). Only later does the play move on to show the ill-tempered eponymous Prodigue,²¹ so lost in his pursuit of pleasures that he curses father and brother and envisions murdering an old servant in order to steal the family's riches.²² Similar condemnations of gaming characterize the early six-

16 Marguerite d'Angoulême, ed. Pierre Jourda (see note 15), 432.

17 Marguerite d'Angoulême, ed. Pierre Jourda (see note 15), 435.

18 This subject continued to be represented onstage well after Marguerite's death. See "L'enfant prodigue," in L. Petit de Julleville, *Histoire du théâtre en France: Répertoire du théâtre comique en France au moyen-âge* (Paris: Leopold Cerf, 1886), 57–60.

19 Petit de Julleville, *Répertoire*, 58, also 357–58, 378, 382, 383–84.

20 Anonymous, *L'histoire de l'enfant prodigue par personnages* (Lyon: Pierre Marniolles, 1616). 1–105. Retrieved from Gallica, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k71511p.image#> (last accessed on Feb. 4, 2019). According to Petit de Julleville (see note 18), this text from 1616 seems to be the same as the earlier three, but this is not altogether certain.

21 Anonymous, *L'enfant prodigue* (see note 20), 32. The duo of *enfants terribles* are accompanied by two other profligates, the boorish Rustre and the dandy Fin Cœur Doux (who truly bring out the worst in their companions), and two prostitutes (whose shameless discourse about their customers is revealing, to say the least).

22 The play also intrigues because of its early "meta" format, a kind of narrated play within a play that begins nearly two-thirds of the way through the playtext. Once the Prodigal Son has lost all his stolen wealth at gaming (being stripped down to his breeches), a somewhat ironically named "Acteur" appears and recites short biblical narratives of the rest of the parable, followed by the Prodigal Son acting out the conclusion of his story: begging for his keep, overseeing the pigs, humbling himself before his father, and being feted joyously upon his return home.

teenth-century morality play *Les Enfants de Maintenant*.²³ This cautionary tale in theatrical guise shows two coddled sons shunning learning for idle pastimes with their grifter teacher, Jabien, who instructs them in every form of luxurious debasement: cursing, blaspheming, lechery, mastery at cards and dice and gleek: “En tous les ars de tromperie, / De finesse et de mocquerie” (34; In all the arts of trickery / Of slickness and mockery). Hoping to get rich quick, they lose even more quickly. One son predictably slips from despair to perdition; the other soberly repents his errant ways and amends his life.

It is of note that the two sons are both egged on and mocked throughout this play by the character of the Fool, whose (bad) advice is precisely that which the repentant son does not choose. No surprise here: fools in France had long been associated with play in all senses of the word (i.e., trickery, games, sport, theater),²⁴ and these multifaceted characters of folly – variously innocent, playful, of lowly status, or ribaldly derisive – could claim their very own theatrical genre, the *sottie*, which flourished in this era.²⁵ Fools add their own skewed element of play in staged renditions of games in this period. In the so-called farce (though evidently a fool’s play) *Les maraux enchesnez*, a trio of fools – here they are rapscallions rather than naive innocents – evoke the pleasures of playing cards, skittles, and dice, as well as of toying with wenches at taverns to all hours.²⁶ *Les sots ecclésiastiques qui jouent leurs bénéfices*, a scorchingly anticlerical *sottie* written (and probably performed) in Paris in 1511, features three fools gambling at cards for bigger and bigger pieces of the ecclesiastical pie.²⁷ Not content with attaining anything less than the occupations of papacy and deity, as well as the highest place in Paradise, they are in the end chastised for their pretensions by The Height of Folly (Haulte Folie), and threatened with the punishment of a quick trip to the netherworld instead. Overall, we see that the role

23 Anonymous, *Moralité nouvelle des enfans de maintenant*, in *Ancien Théâtre Français*, ed. Viollot-le-Duc. Series. Vol. III (Paris: Jannet, 1854), 5–126. See also M. Saint-Marc Girardin, *Tableau de la littérature française au XVI^e siècle, suivi d’études sur la littérature du ...* Saint-Marc Girardin (1801–1873). (Paris: Librairie Académique, 1862), 334–44. Retrieved from Gallica, online at: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k64640054/f359.image> (last accessed on Feb. 4, 2019).

24 An excellent examination of the place of fools in the culture of medieval Western Europe is Max Harris, *Sacred Folly: A New History of the Feast of Fools* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2011).

25 See Heather Arden, *Fools’ Plays: A Study of Satire in the sottie* (Cambridge: University Press, 1980).

26 Anonymous, *La farce des maraux enchesnez*, in *Recueil de farces françaises inédites du XV^e siècle*, ed. Gustave Cohen (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy, 1949), 327–32.

27 Anonymous, *Sottie des sots ecclésiastiques qui jouent leurs bénéfices*, in *Le recueil Trepperel: Les sotties*, ed. E. Droz (Paris: Droz, 1935), 339–69.

games play in the French theater of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries is morally complicated and ultimately ambiguous. Games are represented variously as a poor choice of priority, a common human frailty, an occupation for fools; they are seen as addictively engaging, frequently comical, and potentially deadly. Play and pastimes onstage are disdained and castigated even as they are enjoyed – and more often than not, end badly for the players.

Within this complex theatrical context, Marguerite de Navarre’s piece dealing with play in many guises truly stands out, and stands alone. The plot appears to be wholly original to Marguerite, even though it recalls or refers to numerous biblical passages.²⁸ The main characters are also unusually juxtaposed: crotchety old men abound in French farce of the period,²⁹ but seldom do they boast of torture onstage, especially in the company of legitimately tiny children (one scarcely a babbling toddler). This latter unique nexus points, I think, to another link Marguerite makes within her own œuvre, to which we will turn shortly. Finally, what exactly is the genre of the play? Marguerite calls it a farce, but critics have rightly found little in the play that might be considered farcical in the narrower (and frankly more modern) comic sense of the genre.³⁰ Indeed, Petit de Julleville classified it as a morality play.³¹ *L’Inquisiteur* might best be understood as Marguerite’s way of using the techniques of farce, which included many cross-overs into allegory and morality play, to her own ends.³² As with her other farce, *Le Malade*, which does provide a few overtly comical moments,³³ *L’Inquisiteur* stretches the expectations of stock characters and even the genre of farce itself, showcasing the redemptive possibilities that lie within the performance mode. The medium, even then, was the message.

28 Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV: *Théâtre* (see note 4), 261–68, 569–76.

29 One thinks of *Maître Mimin le Goutteux*, *Raoullet Ployart*, the husbands in *Les Femmes qui font écurer leurs chaudrons*, the husbands in *Les Femmes qui font refondre leurs maris*....

30 Hasenohr and Millet allude to this in their discussion of *Le Malade*, in Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. id. Vol. IV: *Théâtre* (see note 4), 234–35. As they point out, a good discussion of comedy in medieval farce is Bernadette Rey-Flaud, *La farce, ou la machine à rire, théorie d’un genre dramatique* (Geneva: Droz, 1984). Farce was, however, by no means always simply comical; see note 31, below.

31 Petit de Julleville, *Répertoire* (see note 7), 75–77.

32 Plays titled “farces morales” in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries include the anonymous works *Les Gens Nouveaux*; *Marchebeau*, *Galop*, *Amour, et Convoitise*; and *Métier*, *Marchandise*, *Le Berger*, *Le Temps*, *Les Gens*. See Petit de Julleville, *Répertoire* (see note 7), 145–46, 163, 176–77.

33 These mainly involve the character of the Doctor, whose pompousness and greed (among other things) are mocked within the play. *Le Malade*, in Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 4), 234–35.

For in *L'Inquisiteur*, playing itself is re-imagined and redeemed onstage. The three pairs of children engaged in various games who are challenged by the Inquisitor are innocents of tender age, not wayward youths; they participate in their vividly-described pastimes for sport, with no mention of gain or silly trickery. They show joy and wonder, not dissipation and luxury, as they pursue their pastimes.³⁴ The child Janot sits in the shade of the cypress tree “joyeux, non sombre” (vv. 123; joyous, not somber or saddened)³⁵; another child, Thiénot, cannot help but exclaim “Mon dieu, qu’il est beau!” (vv. 146; My God, how beautiful he is!), as he gazes up at a high-flying wild bird. They calmly face and respond to the moralizing yet amoral Inquisitor’s chastisements of their play. His rhetoric echoes the stereotypical laments over misspent youth found in the literature of the era – that games represent idleness, time wasted that was better devoted to sober study (vv. 163–64 171–72), and are matters of lowly nature that will not profit them (vv. 171–72, 196). But whereas in other theatrical works of the era, youthful characters defend their games by lashing out – i.e., the Prodigal Son turning on his elders with curses and scorn – the children’s answers to the Inquisitor’s objections to their play are forthright, yet unfailingly polite: “Monsieur, si nous sommes contans, / Ne vous en veuillez ennuyer” (vv. 165–66; Sir, if we are pleased [to do so] / Do not be disturbed by them). The young ones do not back down; they do not apologize for their play, behavior which the incensed Inquisitor interprets as mockery. Instead, they staunchly defend their pastimes as nothing but worthy of praise: “Le passetemps n’est que louable” (v. 174; the pastime is nothing but laudable). They stand their ground, a rock upon which they shall build.

Before examining the possible symbolism of the games themselves, I wish to shed light on another theatrical tradition that colors the performative background of *L'Inquisiteur*. I have long posited that Marguerite’s inspiration for the terrifying central character stems in part from the figure of raging King Herod, the quintessential villain of medieval mysteries. The flamboyantly dramatic character of King Herod features prominently in several French *mystères* of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, among them the anonymous

³⁴ Hasenohr and Millet note the children play simply “pour le plaisir.” Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 4), 267.

³⁵ *L'Inquisiteur*, in Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet, Vol. IV: *Théâtre* (see note 4), 261–99. All subsequent textual references will be from this edition, though I do make reference to other editions for their notes and commentary.

Rouen *Nativité* (1474),³⁶ Arnoul Greban’s *Mystère de la passion* (second half of the fifteenth century),³⁷ the anonymous early sixteenth-century *Jeu de l’Etoile* from Liège,³⁸ and – most significantly, for we know Marguerite engaged extensively with the lengthy text, even if she never saw it staged – the *Mystère des actes des apôtres* by Arnoul and Simon Greban (ca. 1473).³⁹ Regardless of her source, the Queen’s fascination with the story of Herod and the Innocents is well evidenced in her biblical *comédies*, quite possibly penned during the same decade as *L’Inquisiteur*.⁴⁰ All of her biblical plays give poetical (almost more than theatrical) focus to the scriptural accounts of the Nativity of Christ – the Shepherds’ adoration of the child, the Three Kings’ journey and epiphany, Herod’s ire and the massacre of the Innocents, the escape of Mary and Joseph into the desert. The character of Herod appears in two of these four plays, the *Comédie de l’Adoration des Trois Rois à Jésus Christ* and *Les Innocents*. In both of these plays, the vainglorious, tyrannical King, like the Inquisitor, senses he is being thwarted by an Innocence – and by extension, the soon-to-be-massacred Innocents – who threaten his grip on power.⁴¹ And just like Herod, the Inquisitor is an angry, soon-to-be-deposed ruler, waging a battle to maintain his status – in *L’Inquisiteur*, that would mean France in the midst of the *Réforme*.

In the *Adoration des Trois Rois*, Herod appears as a raw, callous tyrant, boasting of his cruel subjugation of peoples in gleefully active octosyllabic and tetrasyllabic rhymes: “A tous les bons je fais la guerre / Pour la terre / Tennis sous mon autorité / ... / En ma terre / Tiens chascun par crudelité”⁴²

36 Anonymous, *Mystère de l’incarnation et nativité de Nostre Sauveur et Rédempteur Jésus-Christ, représenté à Rouen en 1474*, ed. P. Le Verdier (Rouen: Imprimerie de Espérance Cagniard, 1884–1886).

37 Arnoul Greban, *Le Mystère de la passion*, ed. Gaston Paris & Gaston Raynaud (Geneva: Slatkine, 1970).

38 Anonymous, *Le Jeu de l’Etoile du manuscrit de Cornillon (Liège)*, ed. Claude Thiry (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1980).

39 Simon and Arnoul Greban, *Le Mystère des actes des apôtres*, ed. Raymond Lebègue (Paris: H. Champion, 1929). See also Petit de Julleville, *Histoire du théâtre en France: Les mystères* (Paris: Hachette, 1880), 180–340.

40 See *Marguerite de Navarre: Comédies bibliques*, ed. Barbara Marczuk (see note 15), 8.

41 This characteristic is, of course, not limited to the Herod figure in Marguerite’s theatrical works, nor to French literature of the period.

42 *Comédie de l’Adoration des Trois Rois à Jésus Christ*, in Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 4), 83–139. All subsequent references to this text are from this edition. Note Herod’s use of self-description in a direct exposition to the audience. This was a common technique in *mystères*; it is also used by the Inquisitor in his opening monologue. See *Marguerite de Navarre: Comédies bibliques*, ed. Barbara Marczuk (see note 15), 210, note 57.

(vv. 839–41, 843–44; I make war on all good people / For I have / The earth under my authority / ... / In my world / I hold all through cruelty). The Inquisitor expresses an equally brutal contempt for the masses, the only contrast with his regal doppelgänger being one of poetic meter. Unlike Herod's almost frenetic speech patterns, the Inquisitor's opening monologue is heavy with lugubrious decasyllables: "Quatre ans y a que suis Inquisiteur / De nostre foy, sans espargner personne. / ... / Car il vaut mieux qu'un homme innocent meure / Cruellement, pour estre exemple à tous..." (vv. 19–20, 33–34; Four years I have been Inquisitor / Of our faith, and have not spared a soul. / ... / For it is better that a man should cruelly die / Though innocent, to serve as an example to all ...).⁴³ Like the Inquisitor, Herod perceives all those around him, even those considered men of wisdom, as beneath him in cleverness and subtlety: "Je vais parler a ces trois foulz" (v. 1011; I shall speak with these three fools) he sneers, as he prepares to engage with the Three Wise Men about the child they seek. In like manner the Inquisitor chides his servant's astute observation of some children at play, who seem to be warm despite the cold: "Voilà la raison d'un follet" (v. 93; That is the reasoning of a fool). The Inquisitor sharply berates, even strikes his longsuffering servant when the latter mildly contradicts him: "Quel fol voicy? Te tairas-tu?" (v. 105; What a fool is this? Will you not shut up?). Equally wilfully does Herod belittle those who serve as his advisers and confidants: "Taisez-vous, je sçay mieux tromper / Que vous ne sçauriez faire tous" (vv. 1017–18; Shut up, I know better how to trick them / Than all of you would ever know). This prowess at deception which Herod boasts of is also a trait shared with the Inquisitor, who cynically notes of himself "Tout mon cas gist à faire bonne mine / ... et contre-faitz le bon" (vv. 65–66; All my success rests on my great skill / at cloaking myself / ... and counterfeiting the good).

In Marguerite's biblical drama *Les Innocents*, the parallels between the main character in *L'Inquisiteur* and King Herod are, if anything, even more clear. Herod's speech ordering the massacre of those he perceives as his enemies echoes the Inquisitor's prideful detailing of his torment of the new adherents of Protestantism. Herod's command is merciless:

Qui un seul n'en espargnera
Par extreme crudelité.

⁴³ The Inquisitor comes across as a truly sinister, frightening character, a point driven home by a recent production of a staged reading of the play, in which my translation into English used the same basic metrical and rhyme patterns of the original French. *The Grand Inquisitor* was presented by Les Enfants Sans Abri at the Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, New Orleans, March 2018.

Sans regarder à povre ou riche
Ny à maison petite ou grande,
Trenchez tout ainsi qu'une miche
A grans morceaux, je le commande. (vv. 283–88)

[Not one shall you spare,
From extreme cruelty,
Without regard for poor or rich,
From houses both great and small,
You shall cut them all up into pieces,
Such is my command.]⁴⁴

The Inquisitor's opening monologue is similarly bleak and pitiless:

Bons et maulvais, la chose est claire et ample, /
J'envoye au feu, quant me sont présentez, /
Je n'ay regard seulement qu'a l'exemple /
Et ne me chault de tous les tourmentez. (vv. 41–44)

[Both good and bad, the way is broad and clear;
I send to the pyre those who are sent to me;
My one regard is for the example they set,
And I care not for any of those tortured.]

But there are parallels as well between the youthful characters in these two plays. The "innocents" in the biblical drama, of course, are mere babes in arms, passive actors exposed to the wicked king's utter pitilessness. The scene in which they are torn from their mothers and put to the sword by Herod's soldiers plays out the acts of violence recounted in the words of the Inquisitor, well established in his opening monologue:

Assez de gens se sont mal contantez
De ma rigueur, mais je n'en faiz que rire.
Je n'ay nul soing, fors que bien augmentez
Soient de par moy les moyens de martire. (vv. 45–48)

[Many there are who are sore displeased
At my harsh rule, but I do naught but laugh.
I have no care than to greatly increase
By my own will the paths to martyrdom.]

44 *Comédie des Innocents*, in Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Genviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 4), 141–79. All subsequent references to this text are from this edition.

In *l'Inquisiteur*, the seven children that engage with the clerical figure – one of which is no more than a babbling toddler – are much more active subjects, inspired as they are by the love of a merciful God. Yet, as the audience sees them playing games near the Inquisitor, it is evident they are equally at the mercy of a man who has none as the babies put to the sword by Herod's soldiers. As the Inquisitor scolds the youths' guileless play, threatening them with punishment for their bold answers to his queries, one senses the mortal peril they are in. The correspondences between the characters in the two plays extend to the use of music and song. In *Les Innocents*, the souls of the massacred babes sing a canticle that includes references to Psalm 65 (vv. 1000–77),⁴⁵ praising God for being their defense as a pass through fire into heaven. In *L'Inquisiteur*, the children sing Psalm Three (in Marot's translation into the vernacular, "O Seigneur que de gens,"), asking God to be their shield and sure defender.⁴⁶

The real-life games played by the children in *L'Inquisiteur* – again, three groups of two youths, who speak and presumably act the games out, one after the other – have been only partly examined for their religiously symbolic value. I see fascinating, multivalent possibilities that, I will admit, are only educated conjectures. I will begin out of sequence with the game played by the second pair of children, one that has been reasonably (if perhaps not exhaustively) examined by scholars: that of *chatelet*. This may refer to either the building (and defending) of snow castles or forts, a popular pastime in the sixteenth century⁴⁷ or (more likely, but less showy onstage) the game of *chateau de noix* (which the Inquisitor specifically refers to later).⁴⁸ Whichever kind of castle-game it is, the

⁴⁵ The song includes numerous other references to verses from the Bible as well as certain passages from the mass. See Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 4), 546, notes 138–49.

⁴⁶ While there is little question that this is Marot's translation, the publication of the song does not seem to be in sync with the probable date when this play was written (1534–1536). It seems likely that Marguerite was privy to an early manuscript of the translated Psalm and had Marot's leave to use it in her play. See *Marguerite de Navarre: Théâtre Profane*, ed. V. L. Saulnier (see note 3), 36; Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 4), 572–73, n. 37.

⁴⁷ In his *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, early sixteenth-century Swedish chronicler Olaus Magnus described children playing in snow-fortresses and provided a woodcut of their elaborate games. See "Snow Castles and Horse Racing On Ice: Winter Fun in the Medieval North" on Medievalists.net. Retrieved from <http://www.medievalists.net/2013/11/snow-castles-and-horse-racing-on-ice-winter-fun-in-the-medieval-north/> (last accessed on Feb. 4, 2019).

⁴⁸ This game seems to have been played by placing the nuts into the shape of a castle (or stacking pyramids of nuts on top of each other) and knocking them over; if it were accomplished in one blow, the winner would capture all the nuts. See Esmangart and Eloi Johanneau, *Œuvres de Rabelais, Edition Variorum* (Paris: Dalibon, 1823), 427–28; see also J.-P. Vanden Branden, "Les

second pair of children engages in it quite competitively, one attacking, the other defending his “petit chateau” (v. 133; small castle/ stronghold) from being captured, even, as he says, “Sans craindre mourir” (v. 139; without fearing death). It is worth noting that this scene occurs *before* the Inquisitor arrives to admonish the children for their “worthless” play, yet already we perceive in their words a hint of peril to their lives and place in the world. In regards to this pastime of “castle,” editors from Saulnier to Hasenohr and Millet have drawn a theological link to the defining hymn of the Reformation, “Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott” (ca. 1527–1529), though it is uncertain whether Marguerite knew it.⁴⁹ Her inspiration may have been, as for Luther, the original Psalm 46; it was, after all, one of the thirty that were translated early on by the poet Clément Marot, her protégé.⁵⁰ The “little castle” that pertains to the child could symbolize his own sovereign body; it could also point to Marguerite’s castle and court at Nérac, which gave protection from the very real threat of danger, even death, of Reformer adherents by clerical and governmental institutions symbolized by the Inquisitor.⁵¹ But the ultimate shield and defender would always be the divine presence, ineffable and spiritually invincible.

The third amusement engaged in by the children – less a game than a sport – is perhaps the most elusive to pin down: bird-catching or taking, and bird-keeping. The words used in its description by the youthful Clérot – almost certainly a foreshortened form of Clément Marot⁵² – are ambiguous: “Nous prandrions l’oyseau / Qui volle si haut” (vv. 144–45; We shall take the bird / That flies so high,). This would seem to refer to taking birds in nets or snares, a pas-

jeux d’enfants de Pierre Breughel,” *Les jeux à la Renaissance*, ed. Philippe Ariès and Jean-Claude Margolin (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1982), 517.

⁴⁹ *Marguerite de Navarre: Théâtre Profane*, ed. V. L. Saulnier (see note 3), 54; Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 4), 571, note 18.

⁵⁰ The timeline for its translation is not certain, but it was among the thirty that Marot first translated and had published. See IMF, *The Psalm Poems of Clément Marot*. Retrieved from http://clementmarot.com/psalms_text.htm#Trente_Pseaulmes_de_David (last accessed on Feb. 4, 2019).

⁵¹ Jonathan Reid, “Marguerite de Navarre and Evangelical Reform” (see note 1), 48–49; *Marguerite de Navarre: Théâtre Profane*, ed. V. L. Saulnier (see note 3), 37–41.

⁵² The names of several of the children seem to be telescoped forms of the names of writers and scholars Marguerite sheltered at her court, i.e., Thiénot for Etienne Dolet, Jacquot for Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples. See *Marguerite de Navarre: Théâtre Profane* ed. V. L. Saulnier (see note 3), 38–39; Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 4), 810, note 15.

time which remained popular in France well into the 19th century.⁵³ But the youths' continued conversation undermines this easy interpretation. The institution of bird catching seems to have been primarily one for food, yet the children's chatter is hardly about matters of consumption. Instead, the two revere the handsome flying creatures, esteeming them as priceless: "Sa plume et sa peau / Myeulx qu'un monde vault," (vv. 147–48; His feather [or pen] and his plumage [or skin] / Are worth more than a world), says the youth Thiénot.⁵⁴ Later on, Thiénot speaks with such great tenderness of his bird whose companionship gives him such comfort that his voice falters when he ponders it: "Le myen me console, / Me baise et m'accolle : / La voix m'en default." (vv. 152–54; Mine consoles me / Kisses me and greets me; / My voice fails me). His companion Clérot also declares his admiration for those birds they hold captive: "J'en ay un qui volle / Et passe en parole / Le verd papegai" (vv. 149–51; I have one who flies / Who in its speech / Rivals even the green parrot). The mention of parrots is arresting, and possibly meaningful: these chatty, intelligent birds were associated with a most intriguing pastime that had become well established by the fifteenth century in France: the *jeu du papegai*. It consisted of a wood or cardstock figure set at the top of a pole for archers, crossbowmen, and arquebusiers to shoot at, with prizes awarded for the best shots. This "tir à l'oiseau" or "tir au Roy," (bird shoot / King's shoot) which occurred all over France was created to perfect

53 See "Plover Catching in France," in James Harting, *Essays On Sport* (London: Horace Cox, 1883), 201–05; for a more generalized discussion of the sport of hunting in France, see Jean Verdon, *Les Loisirs en France au Moyen-Age* (Paris: Librairie Jules Tallandier, 1980), 53–87. See also the contribution to this volume by William Mahan.

54 While the songbirds are not precisely identified, it is worthwhile to recall that from antiquity, the nightingale was uniquely linked to poets and their artistic work; indeed, as one critic noted, in Greek literature "nightingale and poet had the same name, aedon or singer." Thus the *double-sens* of the words "plume" and "peau" gain in meaning: both the poet's artistic output and his very life are of inestimable value. See Beryl Rowland, *Birds With Human Souls* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1978), 109–10. For the global significance of the nightingale in poetry at large, see Wendy Pfeffer, *The Change of Philomel: The Nightingale in Medieval Literature*. American University Studies. Series 3: Comparative Literature, 14 (New York, Bern, et al.: Peter Lang, 1985). The link of the Reformers with these creatures had already been well established; in 1523 the German literary powerhouse Hans Sachs (Nuremberg) praised Martin Luther as the poetic herald of the Reformation, in his poem "Die Wittenbergisch Nachtigall" (The Wittenberg Nightingale), which made him truly famous in his hometown and beyond. Retrieved from <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/hans-sachs-ausgewahlte-poetische-werke-5219/34> (last accessed on Feb. 4, 2019). Cf. Horst Brunner, *Hans Sachs. Auf den Spuren der Dichter und Denker durch Franken*, 6 (Gunzenhausen: Schrenk-Verlag, 2009), 30–31.

the new class of archers as their military use was increased.⁵⁵ During the mid-1530s, when it is conjectured *L’Inquisiteur* may have been written,⁵⁶ there was much at stake (sadly, only too literally) for the beleaguered Reformers, yet also much hope for those who supported the new ideas of the Protestant movement in France.⁵⁷ In view of the other double-entendres in the children’s speech (i.e., *plume* could mean either a feather or a quill pen, symbol of writers; *peau* (skin) is an odd, jarring reference in regards to birds, but not in regards to human beings), the possibility is strong that the third pair’s game of bird-catching is an allusion to Marguerite de Navarre’s precarious position vis-à-vis her very Catholic brother, King François I. After the insult of the *Affaire des Placards* (mid-October 1534), the King was taking increasingly threatening aim at her beloved Reformist writers and biblical scholars, who were afforded protection at Marguerite’s court but then were trapped there, like birds in a net.⁵⁸

Arguably the most important and intriguing of the three games, however, is that which occupies the very first pair of children: the *jeu de palets*, or quoits, a variant of shuffleboard.⁵⁹ The game was played by small stones being gently tossed or slid towards a target. Again, the two children playing this game are in competition, one confident of his win, the other gracious in his real one. But these pebbles are truly tokens whose meaning overshoots their humble appearance. Stone, as presented in biblical lore (and in deep readings such as Jef-

55 See Belmas, *Jouer Autrefois* (see note 11), 397 (under “Arc”); Mehl, *Les Jeux au royaume de France* (see note 11), 59–62; and especially Henry Mosnier, *La société du Papegay à Brioude. Tablettes historiques du Velay, 1871–1872*. Le Puy-en-Velay, France: Tablettes historiques du Velay, 1872. Retrieved from BNF Gallica, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9749836s/f39> (last accessed on Feb. 4, 2019).

56 Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 4), 261–65.

57 See Francis Higman, *La diffusion de la Réforme en France, 1520–1565* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1992).

58 I have found another intriguing reference to bird-catching in French theater of the period: the Third Fool’s comment, in the anonymous late fifteenth-century *sottie* *Les Esbahis*: “Je m’esbahis des oisillons / Menu pinchons et alouettes, / Linottes et bergeronnettes / Qui se laissent prander au fillé.” (I am astonished at the baby birds / Little finches and larks / Linnets and yellow wagtails / Who let themselves be caught in nets), 21. As the fool’s play deals with all sorts of social and political satire, the comments would most likely be topical allusions cloaked as metaphors, though it would be difficult indeed to determine at who or what they might have been directed. See *Recueil de farces françaises*, ed. Gustave Cohen (see note 26), 21–25.

59 See Mehl, *Les Jeux au royaume de France* (see note 11), 54, 372. For a general discussion of children’s games in the late medieval period and early Renaissance, see *Les Loisirs en France au Moyen-Age* (see note 52), 153–72.

frey Jerome Cohen's *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman*),⁶⁰ is truly and dauntingly polysemous, associated with the best and worst of the secular as well as the Christian world.⁶¹ Within the complex context of this world, stones can refer to God himself, the cleft rock that is made a hiding place for the Israelites in Exodus (33:21–22), as well as to Christ, the cornerstone of the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20). Stones can also signify the individuals who make up the body of the Christian church. In the first epistle of Peter 2:5, the apostle speaks to the new people of faith “Ye also, as lively (i.e., living) stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”⁶² But the hardness of stone can also point to its implacable quality, its suitability for harsh, inexorable, or cruel purposes. The five smooth stones in the hand of David fell the Philistine giant Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40). A stone's throw – the literal casting of a stone – separates Christ in his agony in Gethsemane from his followers (Luke 22:41). Stones are said to have been showered upon numerous martyrs of legend, including upon early Christian martyr Saint Stephen (Acts 7:59). The last is especially of note because this saint figures in the *Mystère des actes des apotres*, a text so significant to Marguerite that she had it copied out for herself.⁶³

Yet the best clue to the meaning of the children's game of stones may lie in the title of this article. It quotes some of the very first words uttered by the child Janot as he is about to throw his stone: “J'ai tiré si près / Que je touche au but” (vv. 114–15; I have thrown so close / That I am right at the line [or goal]). The remark recalls the concept of “falling short,” as in Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”⁶⁴ The Christian notion of sin engages with Hebrew thought via the Greek language: *hamartia* – failure, being in error, missing the mark, especially in spear throwing.⁶⁵ As Janot tosses the stones, his

⁶⁰ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

⁶¹ It is possible that in this game there is a resonance with Nicholas of Cusa's thrown stone analogy relating to the idea of the power of the soul to move the human body. See Nicholas of Cusa, *De Coniecturis* II, 16, trans. Jasper Hopkins (Minneapolis, MN: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 2000), 244.

⁶² 1 Peter 2:5, King James Version.

⁶³ *Marguerite de Navarre: Comédies bibliques*, ed. Barbara Marczuk (see note 15), 21.

⁶⁴ Marguerite would have been aware of this concept, and indeed of the text, as she had studied Lefèvre d'Étaples' work *Commentaire sur les Epîtres de Saint Paul* as early as 1512. See *Marguerite de Navarre: Comédies bibliques*, ed. Barbara Marczuk (see note 15), 25.

⁶⁵ Strong's *Lexicon* lists several different ways of parsing this complex word: error, offense, wandering, failure to hit the mark. Retrieved from <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?strong=G266> (last accessed on Feb. 4, 2019).

throw is close, but does not reach its goal, i.e., the child cannot attain his win without something else. This “something else” could be construed as faith that comes via the grace of God, understood as a gift without precondition, and a vital aspect of Protestant thought (Luther’s *sola gratia*) and Reformist teaching.⁶⁶ Faith by grace is the skipping stone that alone can close the gap. For when at the end of the game Janot does win, he does not cheer but responds modestly “Vanter ne me doït” (v. 129; I cannot boast / take credit for it). His win, it would seem, was not earned; it is not his due, something he can gloat over. Instead, he insists that it came about through his being ready at the right moment: “L’heur le m’a appris” (v. 130; I was taught it [or learned it] at the [appropriate] time). Grace comes at the moment it is understood and accepted through faith.⁶⁷

This faith will be tested. The Inquisitor, miserable despite his power – “Mais ces propoz troublent tant mon cerveau” (v. 73; But these thoughts so disturb my brain), he admits to himself as he thinks of those he has persecuted – spies the children sporting in the snow. He hastens out to vent his wrath upon their joy. His chiding of the children’s happy pastimes prompts them to defend staunchly their free pursuit of play:

[L’Inquisiteur] Voulez vous donq estre ignorans
Et perdre ainsi vostre jeunesse?
[Pérot] Non, mais c’est à tenir les rancs
De tout vray plaisir et liesse. (vv. 191–94)

[Would you then be ignorant
And so waste your youth?
No, but this is how to hold fast to
All true pleasure and joy.]

It would seem fair to say that play, to these children, is indeed “a significant function – that is to say, there is some sense to it.”⁶⁸ Their rather lengthy ex-

⁶⁶ See Reid, “Marguerite de Navarre and Evangelical Reform” (see note 1), 30–31. We note also in Marguerite’s farce *Le Malade* that sin is said to be overcome “par une grace souveraine.” See *Le Malade*, in Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Genevieve Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 58), 247, v. 108.

⁶⁷ In *Le Malade*, faith comes with immediacy upon hearing the Word of God. See Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 58), 567, note 12. We see this also later in the words of the Inquisitor, who gives thanks to God “Qui a fait tel change / Si soudainement” (vv. 530–31; Who has wrought such change / So suddenly).

⁶⁸ Johann Huizinga, *Homo ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949), 1.

change with the Inquisitor over their games gives good evidence that it is the concept of play itself, and the children's choice of it, that is of moment. For play, as Huizinga noted in his seminal text *Homo ludens*, is not and cannot be a forced task; it "can never be imposed by physical necessity or moral duty."⁶⁹ The children's joyous embrace of play, their stout defense of their freedom to pursue it, may also allude to the path of faith that must be chosen out of free will, not followed out of necessity.

It is *sola fide* in another guise, not as directly allegorized perhaps as in Marguerite's play *Le Malade*,⁷⁰ but manifest nonetheless.⁷¹ The children reject the Inquisitor's insistence upon labor or "good works" of intense study,⁷² as well as his dour dismissal of their freedom to choose to play. "C'est ung trèsbel esbatement / où rien de mal je n'y congnoys" (vv. 169–70; This is a very lovely amusement / wherein lies no evil of which I am aware), Pérot says, justifying his game of *château de noix*. Indeed, the very notion of play, which the Inquisitor dismisses as "de si peu de valleur" (v. 196; of so little worth), appears to be beyond his ability to perceive and grasp. On this point, the children go so far as to challenge their would-be tormentor: "Comment pouvez-vous le jeu veoir / Qui n'a ne forme ne coulleur?" (vv. 197–98; How can you see this game / That has neither form nor color?).⁷³

The children's play now enters a different phase. The Inquisitor, incensed by the children's unflinching responses, turns to peppering them with questions, trying to worry details from them or trip them up into heresy, in a manner chillingly authentic to the inquisitorial process of the time.⁷⁴ But with their courageous replies, the children deflect each of his threat-edged questions and literal interpretations, turning them neatly into their own theological points:

⁶⁹ Huizinga, *Homo ludens* (see note 68), 8.

⁷⁰ Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 4), 231–59; and 566, note 3 and note 5.

⁷¹ The doctrine of justification by faith alone was central to the *Réforme*. See Reid, "Marguerite de Navarre and Evangelical Reform" (see note 1), 53–54.

⁷² "Enfans, enfans, vous perdez temps / Vous feriez myeulx d'estudier" (vv. 163–64; Children, children, you waste your time / You would do better to study).

⁷³ According to the New Testament, God is said to be an invisible entity, i.e., one without form or color. See Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17. But this "game" seems more aptly to refer to the life of faith. See *L'Inquisiteur*, in Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 4), 572, note 26.

⁷⁴ Marguerite de Navarre: *Théâtre Profane*, ed. V. L. Saulnier (see note 3), 44.

L'Inquisiteur: Mon enfant, qui est vostre père?

/... /

Jacot: Le vostre.

L'Inquisiteur: Non est, par saint Père,

Nous ne sommes en rien parens (vv. 211–14)

[My child, who is your father?

/ ... /

Jacot: Your own.

Inquisitor: He is not, by Saint Peter / the Holy Father,

We are in no way related.]

As other scholars have noted, the Inquisitor continues, with increasing frustration, to engage in word-play with the children, though he finds their words "dangereuses et folles" (v. 269; dangerous and foolish) and attempts to silence them, forbidding the children to speak further (v. 270). They comply by keeping strictly to the letter of his mandate – and break into song.

And it is this, their rapturous joy captured in a sung psalm,⁷⁵ a paean to a merciful God that shields his faithful from their enemies, that begins the process of winning over their daunting foe. At first, the self-absorbed Inquisitor insists their singing is to make sport of him: "Je les oy chanter. Qu'est-ecy? / De moy se mocquent, ce me semble" (vv. 289–90; I hear them sing. What's this? / It would seem they are mocking me). The much-abused servant, however, is enchanted and transported by their song; he follows verse after verse, interpreting them with delight, and wishing to remain among these innocent ones whose laughter beckons (v. 339).⁷⁶ For the shared hymn, part of the "mass media" of the sixteenth century,⁷⁷ is but another kind of play, one that may be the most important of all.⁷⁸ The Inquisitor, amazed (and almost unnerved) by the biblically-

⁷⁵ Again, Marot's French translation of Psalm 3 (see note 50).

⁷⁶ Laughter for Marguerite is the sign of spiritual joy and victory. *L'Inquisiteur*, Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 4), 573, note 43.

⁷⁷ A brief introduction to the significance of hymns and songs in the Protestant Reformation in France may be found in Jonathan Beck, *Théâtre et propagande aux débuts de la Réforme: 6 pièces polémiques du Recueil La Vallière*; textes établis d'après le MS B.N. 24341 avec introduction, notices, notes crit. et glossaire. Textes et études: Domaine français, 6 (Geneva: Slatkine, 1986), 47–49.

⁷⁸ Huizinga identified the near-indissoluble bond between music and play in his book *Homo ludens* (see note 68), 158–60. Other critics have noted the significance of song in transforming the Inquisitor and his servant. See Louis Auld, "Music as Dramatic Device in the Secular Theater of Marguerite de Navarre," *Renaissance Drama*, New Series, 7 (Drama and Other Arts) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 200–06. Olivier Millet further notes that in this play, "Song

astute responses of his servant, returns to the children, pleading them to resume “vos doulces chansons” (v. 387; your sweet songs). Rebuffed by their deliberate, watchful silence,⁷⁹ he humbles himself to play a theological riddling-game with the very youngest child, accepting the simplest of answers in near baby-talk (vv. 419–33). The replies he receives – that in the Father-God, one finds rest and sweetness, that man’s good deeds are all for naught – seem to resonate deeply, breaking him out of his pattern of viciousness, setting him on a path toward a strange and joyous transformation. “Je veulx estre enfant, non plus saige. / Il est heureux qui tel devient” (vv. 477–78; I wish to be a child, and a wise man no more / Happy is he who becomes so), he confesses.⁸⁰

The theological implications of these symbolic games and ludic parallels are profound. The children’s chosen pastimes – their games, word-play and song – seem to represent human life and choosing the life of faith, with the gift and assurance of grace abounding. In the children’s fearless encounter with their potential tormentor, grace emerges as a spiritual gift free to young or old, important or marginalized. Grace is all – no one can attain the mark without it, even the most innocent – yet it is all-powerful, all-merciful, all-encompassing. It is also fundamentally transformative. With the vanquishing of the Inquisitor’s pride – “Je sens orgueil mort, et tout vice” (v. 485; I sense my pride is dead, and with it all vices) – the old man’s tyranny melts away. Inspired by joy, he now skips about (metaphorically if not literally) as children might: “Je saulte, je danse” (v. 496; I jump, I dance); he is now fully aware that his redemption has come through divine grace: “Clairement je veoy / De l’oeil de la foy / Mon salut par grace” (vv. 517–19; Clearly I see / Through the eye of faith / [That my] salvation

transposes the children’s pleasure and play into a spiritual and biblical language.” Olivier Millet, “Staging the Spiritual: The Biblical and Non-Biblical Plays,” *A Companion to Marguerite de Navarre* ed. Gary Ferguson and Mary B. McKinley. Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition, 42 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 281–322; here 311–13. Among the Reformers, Martin Luther also made explicit the link between music, whether in song or instrument, and joyful expression of the soul. See Robin A. Leaver, *Luther’s Liturgical Music* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017), 90–92.

⁷⁹ The servant comments that the tiny child is the only one left to answer the Inquisitor’s questions, since he has silenced the older ones (vv. 415–16); this could possibly reference the silencing of early adherents of the Reformist movement, who were exiled, jailed, and later put to death. See V. Saulnier, *Théâtre Profane* (see note 3), 37–41; Reid, “Marguerite de Navarre and Evangelical Reform” (see note 1), 48–49. For a larger discussion of silence in the theater of Marguerite de Navarre, see Regine Reynolds Cornell, “Silence as a Rhetorical Device in Marguerite de Navarre’s *Théâtre Profane*,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 17.1 (Spring, 1986): 17–31.

⁸⁰ This recalls the words of Christ in Matthew 18:3, “Verily, I say unto you, unless ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven” (KJV).

is through grace). His perverse preoccupation with the children’s pastimes, intended at first as a way to torment them but turned back on him by their earnest joy, has brought him to a place where the playing field is levelled, where indeed all are equal. His heart, the Inquisitor declares, is now “doux comme en enfance” (v. 546; sweet as a child’s); Janot notes that the formerly treacherous man has become “semblable à nous” (v. 588; just like we are). The roles of teacher and children are upended, reversed;⁸¹ the once-reviled youths welcome their elder into their humble dwelling of “Unyon et Charité,” (v. 660; union and charity / love) where he will learn from them. At the end all join together in song, this time a setting of des Périers’s poem “Puisque de ta promesse,” praising the light of God’s grace that will illuminate their path at death into eternal reunion with the Divine.⁸²

If pastimes and amusements emerge redeemed from their illicit status in this unique work of theater, however, they are eclipsed by the Inquisitor’s transfiguration onstage. Near the play’s end, the child Pérot contemplates their once-menacing interlocutor. “Dieu change les loupz,” (v. 589; God transforms wolves), he asserts: God has the ability to turn a once-ravaging predator into a gentle lamb. The change is breathtaking in what it suggests, both theologically and theatrically.⁸³ For if this raging Herod-figure, with his real-world reverberations of death-wielding power as Inquisitor, can turn from his life of cruelty, abjure it, and be redeemed into kindness and peace, there is truly no one – not the worst person on earth – that lies beyond the pale, out of the reach of the grace of God. This short work of Renaissance theater may highlight children’s games, but the stakes lie far beyond child’s play.

81 This recalls the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), as well as Isaiah 11:6, Luke 1:51–52.

82 Bonaventure des Périers’ poem was in itself a version of the Cantic of Simeon (Luke 2:29–32). See Marguerite de Navarre, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Olivier Millet. Vol. IV (see note 4), 575–76, note 78.

83 There is at least one critic who asserts that his conversion is false, an utter sham, rendering the play a farce in the most literal and modern sense; I find little to support this claim. See Olga Anna Duhl, “La polémique religieuse dans le théâtre de Marguerite de Navarre,” *Le Théâtre polémique français, 1450–1550*, ed. Marie Bouhaik-Gironès, Katell Lavéant, and Jelle Koopmans (Rennes: Presses Universitaires, 2008), 189–210. Retrieved from OpenEdition Books, online at: <https://books.openedition.org/pur/29424> (last accessed on Feb. 4, 2019).

Scott L. Taylor

Jeux Interdits: The Rationale and Limits of Clerical and Lay Efforts to Enjoin “Scurrilia Solatia”

A little more than thirty-five years ago, Marvin L. Colker, known for his work cataloging the Latin manuscripts of Trinity College Dublin, published a note in *Speculum* on what the fifteenth-century table of contents to manuscript 281 labelled “Quedam revelacio et quedam narracio de sacramento eukariste,” interspersed with two extracts from Augustine’s *De civitate Dei*.¹ The vision appears in the context of a supposed letter from the author to a monk whom he has heard intends to leave his order. So very concerned is the writer over this news that on Corpus Christi he secludes himself in his oratory fasting and praying for his brother, only to fall asleep, and as he relates:

... And I fastede for zou corpus cristi euyn to brede *and* watyr, *and* when I was in my oratory prayinge for zou, I fel asclepe, *and* y seyzt wyt my gosty eyen how ze wold have igo out of zoure ordyr, *and* I sey thre men come to feche zou out of zoure ordyr *and* badde zou go wyt hem for ze myzt bettyr serue god to lyfe in þe world wyt hem than in zoure ordyr. One of hem was a squire, þe secunde was a clerke, *and* þe thyrthe was a koke, for I knew be serteyne tokenys þat he was koke. And aftyrward I sey manye fendys icome for to brynge zou out of zoure ordyr, *and* some of hem profrede zou tenyse ballys *and* some bowe *and* arowys *and* some tablis *and* ches *and* othyr sueche harlotrye. And aftyrward I seye a foule deuyl most *and* vglyest of alle stande in a pulpytt, *and* he hadde a womman in hys armys *and* schewede zou here nakede brest down to þe nawyl *and* seyde þat ze should go wyt hym. And þanne I saw zoure prioure *and* þe couent come wyt many smale cordys *and* fast-nede hem aboute zou *and* conseylede zou wyt fayre suete worde for to abyde wyt hem. *And* so þey taryede zou.²

[And I fasted for you Corpus Christi, even to bread and water, and when I was in my oratory praying for you, I fell asleep, and I saw with my spiritual eyes how you would have yourself depart your order, and I saw three men come to fetch you out of your order and bade you to go with them for you might better serve god to life in the world with them than in your order. One of them was a squire, the second was a clerk, and the third was a cook, for I knew by certain tokens that he was a cook. And afterward I saw many fiends come to you for to bring you out of your order, and some of them proffered you tennis balls and

1 Marvin L. Colker, “The Lure of Women, Hunting, Chess, and Tennis: A Vision,” *Speculum* 59.1 (1984): 103–05.

2 *Reuelacio*, ll. 11–25, in Colker, “The Lure of Women” (see note 1), 105.

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some bows and arrows and some tables and chess and other such harlotry. And afterward I saw a foul devil most and ugliest of all stand in a pulpit, and he had a woman in his arms and showed you her naked breast down to the navel and said that you should go with him. And then I saw your prior and the convent come with many small cords and fastened them about you and counselled you with fair sweet words for to abide with them. And so they detained you – All translations, unless noted otherwise, are my own]

The revelation concerning the monk continues, but it seems to be unfinished, and so we never learn the outcome of the battle for his loyalties. A fascinating example of visionary literature, it is also perhaps the sole literary coincidence of bows and arrows, game pieces, tennis balls, and naked ladies in the same paragraph. Scholars such as Robert Bubczyk who have mentioned it in relationship to the history of chess or other games have interpreted the dream as evidencing simply the tension between the world as represented by aristocratic pursuits and the values of the church and particularly the cloister,³ though at least two of these entertainments were first popularized in Europe by the monks.⁴ But it is possible to conceive the dichotomy more broadly as between the *civitas Dei* and the *civitas terrarum*, hence having implications not only for the *ecclesia* proper but for the entire *congregatio fidelis*. In this respect, all believers as soldiers of Christ, not just the military orders, can take counsel from Bernard's exhortation to the Knights Templar, lauding the rejection of such abominations as chess, dice, hunting, farce, tales, scurrilous songs, the spectacle of games, and all manner of vanity and unfaithful excess.⁵ When understood in this light, the question is not merely spiritual versus secular, sacred versus profane, but vocation versus avocation.

Viewed from this perspective, it is perhaps little wonder that throughout the Middle Ages, accelerating during the twelfth century, but continuing in various contexts well into the *Frühneuzeit* and occasionally beyond, prelates and princes

3 Robert Bubczyk, "Ludus inhonestus et illicitus? Chess, Games, and the Church in Medieval Europe," *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature*, ed. Serina Patterson. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 23–43; here 27–28.

4 On the nature of tennis as a well-ordered activity played by monks and aristocrats, and its significance in European courtly literature, see Marilyn Sandidge, "The Games Giants Play," in this volume. Cf. also the relevant comments by Albrecht Classen on the history of tennis and other sports in the Introduction to this volume.

5 "Verbum insolens, opus inutile, risus immoderatus, murmur vel tenue, sive susurrium nequam, ubi deprehenditur, relinquitur inemendatum. Scacos et aleas detestantur; abhorrent nationem: nec ludicra illa avium rapina (ut assolet) delectantur. Mimos, et magos, et fabulatores, scurrilesque cantilenas, atque ludorum spectacula, tanquam vanitates et insanias falsas respuunt et abominantur." *Liber ad Milites Templi, de laude novae Militiae*, CAPUT IV. De conversatione Militum Christi.

prohibited various games ranging from chess to soccer, bowls and shuffleboard [shovillaborde] altogether or restricted their pursuit to certain groups and specified conditions or circumstances, considering them not so much pastimes as a waste of time. Some scholars such as Le Goff have posited the economic explanation that in expanding and increasingly monetary economies, ecclesiastical authorities feared that the populous would divert their largesse from pious endowments to recreation and entertainment.⁶ Bubczyk, sympathetic with Le Goff's view, seems to suggest that the same economic rationale could be extended as well to secular interdicts.⁷

The problem with this explanation is two-fold. First, many of the prohibitions concerning games were manifestly reasonable on their face. For example, the ban on football issued first by the Mayor of London in 1314, and subsequently by royal ordinance of Edward III in 1346, was clearly designed to preserve the peace and safety of the community against the dangers of what was commonly 'mob' football.⁸ The 1190 directives to the crusader armies by Richard I and Philip Augustus, forbidding gambling by anyone beneath the rank of knight, and limiting stakes to 20 shillings per diem to all others, was designed first to limit violent disputes among members of the fighting forces, and second to avoid impoverishment of the soldiery.⁹ Among clerics, games of chance were al-

6 See, e.g., "Réalités sociales et codes idéologiques au début du XIII^e siècle. Un *exemplum* de Jacques de Vitry sur les tournois," *Publication commémorative*, tome IV des publications de l'Institut de recherches iconographiques sur la civilisation et les arts du Moyen Âge de l'Autriche (Vienna: Institut für mittelalterliche Realienkunde Österreichs, 1980), 1–7, reprinted in Jacques Le Goff, *L'imaginaire médiéval. Essais*. Bibliothèque des Histoires (Paris: Gallimard, 1985; nouvelle éd., Paris: Gallimard, 1991), 248–61. In fairness, Le Goff writes that the Western legacy of *otium* was extremely mixed. See his "Travail, techniques et artisans dans les systèmes de valeurs du haut Moyen Âge (Ve–Xe siècle)," *Artigiano e tecnica nella Società dell'alto Medioevo occidentale*, *Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo*, XVIII (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1970), 239–66. Furthermore, his recognition of the changing value of time as advanced in his "Le temps du travail dans la crise du XIV^e siècle: du temps médiéval au temps moderne," *Le Moyen Âge* LXIX (1963): 597–613, reprinted in id., *Pour un autre Moyen Âge: Temps, travail et culture en Occident*. Seres. Bibliothèque des Histoires (Paris: Gallimard, 1977; 2nd ed., Paris: Gallimard, 1991), 91–107, does foreshadow various developments in secular control that will be discussed *infra*.

7 Robert Bubczyk, "Ludus inhonestus et illicitus?" (see note 3), 23–43; here 30–31.

8 See generally, F. P. Magoun, Jr., "Football in Medieval England and in Middle-English Literature," *The American Historical Review* 35 (1929): 33–45. See the more detailed discussion at note 29 and accompanying text *infra*.

9 On this problem and the problem of gambling and military discipline during the crusades generally, see Elizabeth Lapina, "Gambling and Gaming in the Holy Land: Chess, Dice and Other Games in the Sources of the Crusades," *Crusades* 12 (2013): 121–32.

ways held in suspicion, both on grounds that the Roman soldiers cast lots for Christ's vestments and on the proclamation of Jesus that one shall not tempt the Lord, thy God, although gambling was more often specifically condemned on the basis of cupidity or idleness.¹⁰

Second, and perhaps more important for our discussion, many of the interdicts against games arose earliest and most harshly against clerics, not the laity, as for example the condemnation of chess. Granted, the case for clerical condemnation of chess is confused by the frequent reference to "*schaccos et aleas*," seemingly conflating chess and dice, and the fact that from India to Iceland, variants of what we know as chess were indeed played with dice. Even bishops could be confounded by the terminology of "*alea*" and the prohibitions against being "*aleatores*." Was it an injunction against gambling, a sanction against a specific game, or the anathematizing of any contact with dice as physical objects? Perhaps no better example of this ambiguity exists than the often-discussed letter of Peter Damian to Pope Alexander II recounting his meeting with the bishop of Florence over the interpretation of "*alea*."¹¹ Apparently, while Cardinal-Bishop Damian and the Florentine bishop were travelling together, he had witnessed the bishop playing chess with other travelers. Confronted by the cardinal with what he deemed to be a significant delict, the bishop replied that chess did not constitute "*alea*."

It is not perfectly clear from his position whether he meant by this that chess was not gambling, or whether it was simply a different game than that forbidden

10 On idleness and gambling, consider the commentary of Clement of Alexandria: "The game of dice [κῦβος] is to be prohibited, and the pursuit of gain, especially by dicing, which many keenly follow. Such things the prodigality of luxury invents for the idle. For the cause is idleness, and a love for frivolities apart from the truth. For it is not possible otherwise to obtain enjoyment without injury; and each man's preference of a mode of life is a counterpart of his disposition." *Paedagogus* 3.11. Translation from A. Cleveland Coxe, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Volume 2: *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermes, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria (Entire)*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Revised and chronologically arranged with brief prefaces and occasional notes by A. Cleveland Coxe (New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885). This issue of wasting time also seems to be of primary concern to the anonymous author of *De Aleatoribus*; see Adolf von Harnack, ed., *Der pseudocyprianische Tractat De aleatoribus: die älteste lateinische christliche Schrift: ein Werk des römischen Bischofs Victor I. (Saec. II.)*. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, 5 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1888), ch. 5.

11 The relevant portion is the antepenultimate paragraph of Book 1, Letter 10, *Petri Damiani Monachi Ordinis S. Benedicti Epistolarum Libri Octo*, ed. Sebastian Cramoisy (Paris: Officina Niuelliana, 1610), 34–46; here 45. The letter is discussed, *inter alia*, in Harold J.R. Murray, *A History of Chess* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913), 408–15; and in Robert Bubczyk, "Ludus in-honestus et illicitus?" (see note 3), 23–43; here 29–30.

in the canons. Damian, in his penalization of the bishop, maintained, however, that chess was subsumed under the rubric. While Murray and Bubczyk make a reasonable argument that it was understood at that place and time that chess was played with the assistance of dice, this would suggest that the Cardinal was conflating “*aleas*” and “*taxillos*.” Alternatively, he may have been condemning under the rubric any game with an element of chance.

Nonetheless, it would be foolish to think, given the plethora of clerical condemnations of chess, that a majority were directed toward these now all-but extinct hybrid games, or were based on the fact that in some cases bets were placed on matches.¹² Rather, a fair reading of the texts condemning chess and other games, even where *aleas* are mentioned, reveals that the underlying hostility is less toward gambling than toward *scurrilia solatia*, silly or idle recreations, as Archbishop John Peckham would label them.¹³ It is not so much that they are immoral *per se*, as that they are amoral distractions from the true Christian vocation, whether one be cleric or layman. Even Peter Damian in the letter discussed above, refers to colluding “in scachorum vanitate,” in the folly of chess, and in explaining his sanction of the bishop to Pope Alexander II, explains “Hoc autem diximus, ut quam inhonestum, quam absurdum, quam denique foedum sit in sacerdotem ludibrium ex alterius emendation noscatur” [This we pronounced, so that from the correction of another, it might be known how unseemly, how foolish, in short, how base is sport in a priest]. Sometimes translated as a condemnation of “this game,” there is no demonstrative adjective in the Latin text qualifying “ludibrium.” Indeed, from the context taken as a whole, the Cardinal seems to be arguing that empty play in general is beneath the clerical office.

The tenth-century Benedictine monk of Einsiedeln who authored what is perhaps the oldest extant European work on chess, *Versus de Scachis*, opens

12 Even Murray in discussing Damian’s letter concedes that “The two disputants knew chess as a game that **was often** played with the help of the dice.” [Emphasis added] *A History of Chess* (see note 10), 409.

13 “Scaccorum autem ludum et consimilia scurrilia solatia vobis omnibus, occasione Roberti de Hunstaneston, perpetue inhibemus, quod si ipse vel vestrum aliquis contrarium praesumpserit attemptare, ipsum ad ingress ecclesiae et omni actu legitimo suspendimus, donec tribus diebus in pane et aqua jejuneverit, omni dispensation circa hoc cuilibet subditio nostro penitus interdicta.” *Registrum Epistolarum fratris Johannis Peckham Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis*, ed. Charles Trice Martin, 3 vols. *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* [Rolls Series], 77 (London: Longman, 1882–1886), 1:77. Bubczyk also notes the undeniable indignation of the Archbishop over these vile activities of the monks of Coxford, although he does not speculate as to whether these games are *malum in se*, or simply clownish activities and hence *malum prohibitum*. See “Ludus Inhonestus et Illicitus?” (see note 3), 32.

his treatise with the conditional proviso “Si fas est ludos abiectis ducere curis”: If it be permissible to play games in order to throw off cares.¹⁴ To which I dare say certainly Peter Damian, as well as Bernard and a good many other clerics would respond, “Well, it isn’t.”

In some respects, the arguments of clerics such as Bernard against gaming resemble their arguments and those of writers such as Andreas Capellanus in the *De Reprobatione* against courtly love, itself perhaps the greatest “game” of the Middle Ages, and which in the *romans* of authors such as Chrétien de Troyes was frequently interwoven with chess and other games.¹⁵ It is not that ecclesiastic writers were inherently against play. But as suggested by the extensive references to play in the works of Thomas Aquinas as revealed by the inventory of Luiz Jean Rauand,¹⁶ play should be directed to a greater end, whether a specific educational purpose, a question of health, or clearing the mind for rigorous study or contemplation. There is admittedly a certain tension here between objectives that a little less than a century later Petrarch discussing monastic leisure from a humanistic perspective in *De otio religioso* would identify between Aristotle’s praise of ethical time-management, “Non vacamus ut vacemus” (We do not rest now, so that we may have leisure later) [*Nic. Eth.* 1177b],¹⁷ and the psal-

14 See Helena M. Gamer, “The Earliest Evidence of Chess in Western Literature: The Einsiedeln Verses,” *Speculum* 29 (1954): 734–50. The entire text is reproduced in Harold J. R. Murray, *A History of Chess* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913), at 512–14; and is discussed in Robert Bubczyk, “Ludus inhonestus et illicitus? Chess, Games, and the Church in Medieval Europe,” *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature*, ed. Serina Patterson (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 23–43; here 28–29.

15 On the first point, see Alexander J. Denomy, *The Heresy of Courtly Love*, with an introduction by William Lane Kelcher, Boston College Candlemas Lectures on Christian Literature (Boston: The Declan X. McMullen Co., 1947). On the latter point, see Jenny Adams, “Medieval Chess, Perceval’s Education, and a Dialectic of Misogyny,” *Chess in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: A Fundamental Thought Paradigm of the Premodern World*, ed. Daniel E. O’Sullivan. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 10 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 111–34. See also Albrecht Classen, “Spiel als Kultur und Spiel als Medium der Lebensbewältigung im Mittelalter: Vom Schachspiel und Liebeswerben hin bis zur literarischen Spielführung,” *Etudes Germaniques* 73.3 (2018): 333–55. See also his Introduction to this volume.

16 See, e.g., “Tomás de Aquino y el Logos ludens: Dios que crea jugando,” *Educação & Linguagem* 16 (2013): 145–162; also “Le jeu dans la pensée de Thomas d’Aquin,” *Revista Internacional d’Humanitats* 23 (2011): 21–26.

17 “δοκεῖ τε ἡ εὐδαιμονία ἐν τῇ σχολῇ εἶναι: ἀσχολούμεθα γὰρ ἵνα σχολάζωμεν, καὶ πολεμοῦμεν ἵν’ εἰρήνην ἄγωμεν” [Again, happiness is thought to imply leisure; for we toil in order that we may have leisure, as we make war in order that we may enjoy peace]. Ἠθικά Νικομάχεια [*Nicomachean Ethics*]. This passage is discussed by Aquinas as follows: “Videturque felicitas etc. Positis quinque rationibus ex quibus ostendebatur, quod felicitas consistit in speculatione veritatis secundum convenientiam ad ea quae supradicta sunt, hic addit sextam quae procedit ex qua-

mist's prompting, "Vacate, et videte quoniam ego sum Deus" (Be still and know that I am God)¹⁸ from which Petrarch concludes, "vos vero vacate ut vacetis in eternum" (relax now, however, so as to relax later in eternity).¹⁹ That tension is revealed as illusory, however, if one recalls that *chez* Aquinas, play is a means to an end, while religious contemplation is the end itself, a precursor to the ultimate *visio beatifica* in the next life.²⁰

Perhaps this becomes clearer if we consider not so much the condemnation of particular games, but their defense. For example, John of Salisbury, who in the *Policraticus* devotes two chapters expressing his condemnation variously of hunting, dice, and board games, is favorably disposed toward rithmomachia on grounds that it is instructive of mathematics.²¹ Around the same time as the earliest European reference to chess was being penned, Wibold, Bishop of Cambray, was creating a dice game called "Ludus Regularis seu Clericalis," where the rolls corresponded to one of fifty-six virtues, the idea being to achieve

dam conditione felicitatis, quam supra non posuerat. Felicitas enim consistit in quadam vacatione. Vacare enim dicitur aliquis quando non restat ei aliquid agendum: quod contingit cum aliquis iam ad finem pervenerit. Et ideo subdit, quod non vacamus ut vacemus, idest laboramus operando, quod est non vacare, ut perveniamus ad quiescendum in fine, quod est vacare. Et hoc ostendit per exemplum bellantium, qui ad hoc bella gerunt quod ad pacem adoptatam perveniant" [And it seems that happiness, etc. With five reasons advanced from which he (Aristotle) showed that happiness consists in the contemplation of truth according to convention in relation to those things previously discussed, he now adds a sixth which proceeds from a certain condition of happiness that he did not consider previously. Indeed, happiness involves a kind of leisure. For a person is said to have leisure when he has nothing further to do, which happens when someone arrives at some goal. Therefore, he adds that we refrain from rest now in order to have leisure later, that is, we labor at some business in order to arrive at quiescence at the conclusion, and this is having leisure. And he finds an example of this in combatants who wage war to obtain an acceptable peace]. *Sententia Libri Ethicorum* Lib.10 Lec.11. *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, Doctoris Angelici, Opera Omnia*, Tomus XLVII, v.2 (Rome: Ex Typographia Polyglotta S.C. de Propaganda Fide, 1969).

18 "Vacate, et videte quoniam ego sum Deus; exaltabor in gentibus, et exaltabor in terra." Psalm 45:11 *Biblia Sacra Vulgata* [Psalm 46:10 in KJV].

19 On this point, see Richard Morton's review of Francesco Petrarch, *On Religious Leisure: De otio religioso*, ed. and trans. Susan S. Schearer, intro. by Ronald G. Witt (New York: Italica Press, 2002), in *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 13 (2003): 286–90.

20 Which Petrarch himself notes, observing, "'Non vacamus ut vacemus' dicit Aristotiles; vos vero vacate ut vacetis in eternum et sortem vestram plaudentes agnoscite, que alienarum collatione sortium clarior fiet." [Aristotle says, "We do not rest now, so that we may have leisure later; relax now, however, so as to relax later in eternity, and discern with approbation your lot, for it will become more glorious with comparison to the lot of others]. *De otio religioso* (see note 19).

21 See Ann E. Moyer, *The Philosopher's Game: Rithmomachia in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 2001).

pairs of virtues with the highest point total, but the underlying objective being to encourage reflection upon the various devout qualities and their relationship.²² Defenders of chess often argued it was instructive of geometry, others a mnemonic device, but even more argued it to be an allegory of good governance, moral virtue, or social order.²³ And tennis, which gained popularity in Europe among monastic circles, was physical exercise that a healthy body would better enable mind and spirit. In short, the justification for games was utilitarian; proper play could and should be a part of work.

And what of secular authorities? Certainly, it is possible to find an occasional potentate who out of religious devotion was prepared to ban entertainments thought incompatible with the spiritual well-being of his subjects, although this was usually coupled with more practical concerns. For example, the thirteenth-century French kings waged a virtual war on dice. Article 35 of the ordinance issued at Paris in June, 1254, for the reformation of morals in the Languedoc and the Languedoil provided “Finally, we strictly forbid that anyone play at dice whatsoever, whether it be at games of chance or chess; furthermore, we forbid dice parlors and wish to bar them entirely, and hold that they be harshly punished. Moreover, we forbid the manufacture of dice.”²⁴ This prohibition was repeated in article 10 of the 1256 ordinance for use of the kingdom, which provisions in turn, are found at the end of the thirteenth century translated almost verbatim into the old French legal compendium which also included *Li livres de justice et de plet*.²⁵ This latter work further specifies in Book 18, Chap-

22 The game is described in full by Baldericus Noviomensis, Bishop of Noyon en Tournai, in his *Chronicon Cameracense et Atrebatense sive historia utriusque ecclesiae III libris adhinc DC fere annis conscripta*, ed. Georgius Colvenerius (Douai: Bogard, 1615), bk. 1, ch. 88, pp. 142–53.

23 One thinks particularly of Jacobus de Cessolis and his handbook on chess, which was translated into a number of languages. The primary modern editions of the original Latin are: Jacobus de Cessolis, *Liber de moribus hominum et officiis nobilium*, éd. Ernst Köpke (Brandenburg: Matthes, 1879); and Marie Anita Burt, “Jacobus de Cessolis: Libellus de moribus hominum et officiis nobilium ac popularium super ludo scachorum,” Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, Austin, 1957. On its allegorical significance, see Dario del Puppo, “The Limits of Allegory in Jacobus de Cessolis’ *De Ludo scaccorum*,” *Chess in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: A Fundamental Thought Paradigm of the Premodern World*, ed. Daniel E. O’Sullivan. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 10 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 221–40; and more generally, Daniel O’Sullivan, “Changing the Rules in and of Medieval Chess Allegories” in the same volume, 199–220.

24 “Preterea prohibemus districtè nullus homoludat ad tanillos, sive aleis aut scaccis; scholas autem deciorum prohibemus et prohiberi volumus omnino, et tenentes eas districtiùs puniantur. Fabrica etiam deciorum prohibetur.”

25 “Après nos défendons que nus jeue ès dis en nule manière, se n’est ès tables ou as eschaz; et défendons les escoles des diz, et volons que eles soient deffendues en totes manière; et cil qui les

ter 24, dealing with punishments, that if anyone plays at dice or tables and a complaint is lodged, they shall owe twenty deniers on the complaint.²⁶ These provisions, however, seem largely geared to gambling and designed to mimic the interdicts of the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, particularly Book 3, title 43 of the Code, discussing the history of Roman gaming and making provision for its restrictions:

Aleorum lusus antiqua res est et extra operas pugnantis concessa, verum pro tempore prodiit in lacrimas, milia extraneorum nominationum suscipiens. quidam enim ludentes nec ludum scientes, sed nominationem tantum, proprias substantias perdiderunt, die noctue ludendo in argento apparatu lapidum et auro. consequenter autem ex hac inordinatione blasphemare conantur et instrumenta conficiunt. Commodis igitur subiectorum providere cupientes hac generali lege decernimus, ut nulli liceat in privatis seu publicis locis ludere neque in specie neque in genere: et si contra factum fuerit, nulla sequatur condemnatio, sed solum reddatur et competentibus actionibus repetatur ab his qui dederunt vel eorum heredibus aut his negligentibus a patribus seu defensoribus locorum: Non obstante nisi quinquaginta demum annorum aliqua praescriptione: Episcopis locorum hoc inquirentibus et praesidium auxilio utentibus. Deinde vero ordinent quinque ludos, ton monobolon ton condomonobolon ke kondacca ke repon ke perichyten. sed nemini permittimus etiam in his ludere ultra unum solidum, etsi multum dives sit, ut, si quem vinci contigerit, casum gravem non sustineat. non solum enim bella bene ordinamus et res sacras, sed et ista: interminantes poenam transgressoribus, potestatem dando episcopis hoc inquirendi et auxilio praesidium sedandi. Prohibemus etiam, ne sint equi lignei: sed si quis ex hac occasione vincitur, hoc ipse recuperaret: domibus eorum publicatis, ubi haec reperiuntur. Si autem noluerit recipere is qui dedit, procurator noster hoc inquireat et in opus publicum convertat. Similiter provideant iudices, ut a blasphemis et periuriis, quae ipsorum inhibitionibus debent comprimi, omnes penitus conquiescant.

[The practice of games of chance is very ancient, and has been permitted to soldiers when they were not otherwise occupied, but, having been adopted by innumerable foreign nations, it has been the cause of many tears, for persons who were not professional gamblers and did not understand the game, playing day and night, lost all their property by staking their money, their ornaments, their precious stones, and their gold. As the result of this they are ordinarily led to blaspheme the name of God and curse Him, and execute instruments. Therefore, having in view the welfare of Our subjects, We decree by this general law that no one shall be permitted to gamble either in public or private houses, or other places, or to watch those who do; and if this law should be violated no prosecution shall follow, but any

tendront soent puni durement. Forge de diz soet défendue part tout. Item, que la forge des dez soit deffendue et devée par tout nostre royaume, et tout homme qui sera trouvé jouant aux dez communément, ou par commune renommée, fréquentant taverne ou bordel, soit reputé pour infâme, et débouté de témoignage de visite.” *Li Livres de Jostice et de Plet*, ed. Louis Nicolas Rappet (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1850), 325, note 1.

²⁶ *Li Livres de Jostice et de Plet* (see note 25), “§ 12. Se aucuns jue ès diz, ou ès tables, et il se plaint del jeu, il doit vingt deners de la clamor.”

amount which has been paid shall be returned, and can be recovered by proper actions, either by the person who paid it, or by their heirs even if they have neglected to demand it or by their attorney or their parents; or, if they should fail to do so, the Treasury can recover it by its representatives, notwithstanding the prescription, unless it has run for fifty years. The bishops of the different dioceses shall see that this law is executed, and shall have the right to avail themselves of the aid of the Governors of provinces, and they shall regulate the following five games, namely: comon-belon, comon-diaulomolon, rhindalca, kayron, and eperusan. We do not, however, permit the stakes in these games to exceed one solidus, no matter how wealthy the persons may be, and if anyone should happen to be beaten, he will not sustain a serious loss, for We not only legally regulate wars, but also matters connected with amusement. We do not prescribe a penalty for those who violate this law, still, We grant authority to bishops to make an investigation, and demand the aid of Governors to enforce it; and We absolutely forbid the game called “wooden horses” to be played, and if anyone should lose while engaged in it, he can recover what he has lost, and the houses in which persons are found to be gambling in this manner shall be confiscated. When the person who paid the money is unwilling to have it refunded, Our Procurator shall claim it, and employ it for public purposes. Judges shall likewise see that all persons abstain from blasphemy and perjury (which, indeed, should be prevented by their authority).^{27]}

Lest it be thought that this title of the Code merely exhibits the influence of the Church on Roman law, and it cannot be denied that it does evidence the effects of ecclesiastic institutionalization and the thought of the Church fathers, these provisions had roots at least as far back as the *Leges Titia* and *Cornelia* and *Publicia*, which forbade all games of chance except during the Saturnalia in the month of December.²⁸ And while these provisions suggest a long history in the

27 Code Bk. 3, Title 43. The translation is from *The Civil Law, Including the Twelve Tables, the Institutes of Gaius, the Rules of Ulpian, the Opinions of Paulus, the Enactments of Justinian, and the Constitutions of Leo*, ed. and trans. S. P. Scott, 12 vols. (Cincinnati, OH: Central Trust Co., 1932), XII, available online at <https://droitromain.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/> (last accessed on Feb. 8, 2019). Justice Blume in his annotation of the Code translated “comon-belon, comon-diaulomolon, rhindalca, kayron, and eperusan” as leaping, pole-vaulting, throwing javelins or pikes, wrestling and show fights. Unpublished in his lifetime, his manuscript is the basis for the most recent translation of the Code, *The Codex of Justinian: A New Annotated Translation, with Parallel Latin and Greek Text Based on a Translation by Justice Fred H. Blume*, ed. Bruce W. Frier. Serena Connolly, Simon Corcoran, Michael Crawford, John Noël Dillon, Dennis P. Kehoe, Noel Lenski, Thomas A. J. McGinn, Charles F. Pazdernik, and Benet Salway; with contributions by Timothy Kearley. 3 vols. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016). A second edition of his digitalized manuscript edited by Timothy G. Kearley is available at: <http://www.uwyo.edu/lawlib/blume-justinian/ajc-edition-2/> (last accessed on Feb. 8, 2019).

28 These three laws are specifically mentioned by Marcian in the Digest 11.5.3. See, generally, the entry on “alea” in Charles Short and Charlton T. Lewis, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1879). It is interesting that Horace in his *Odes*, Book III, no. 24, seems to associate *alea* with a certain immaturity or even effeminacy: “Nescit equo rudis haerere ingenuus

West of restricting or prohibiting gambling among the general populace, well ante-dating the institutional Christian church, they equally assert the authority of the government to regulate the private amusements of its subjects. This governments, particularly in England and France, did with relish in the fourteenth century in the name of military preparedness.

In France, Philippe V banned all games not susceptible to serving the defense of the kingdom, while Edward III similarly prohibited all games, excepting only archery and accordingly lifting the taxes on the manufacture of bows and arrows.²⁹ Charles V then responded April 3, 1369, with an interdiction of all games “not designed to exercise and familiarize our said subjects with the manufacture and use of arms in the defense of our said realm.”³⁰ Richard II would

puer venarique timet, ludere doctior, seu Graeco iubeas trocho, seu malis vetita legibus alea ...” (An ignorant freeborn boy does not know how to sit a horse and fears hunting, being more educated to play, whether at Greek hoop-trundling or if you prefer, dice forbidden by the laws), ll. 54–58, while writers such as Cicero associated such games with old age: “Sibi habeant igitur, arma, sibi equos, sibi hastas, sibi clavam et pilam, sibi venationes atque cursus, nobis senibus ex lusionibus multis talos relinquant et tesseras; id ipsum ut lubebit, quoniam sine eis beata esse senectus potest” (Thus, let the young have their arms, horses, spears, clubs, balls, swimming-bouts, and foot-races; let them leave for us old men, from their many diversions, knuckle-bones and dice; this thing let them do as may be pleasing, since without these old age can be happy). *Cato Major de Senectute*, 16:58. See also Elena Quintana Orive, “D. 11.5 (De aleatoribus) y C. 3.43 (De aleae lusu et aleatoribus): Precedentes romanos del contrato de juego,” *Revista General de Derecho Romano* 42 (2009): 17–38.

29 “The King to the Sheriffs of London, greeting. Because the people of our realm, as well of good quality as mean, have commonly in their sports before these times exercised the skill of shooting arrows; whence it is well known, that honour and profit have accrued to our whole realm, and to us, by the help of God, no small assistance in our warlike acts; and now the said skill being, as it were, wholly laid aside, the same people please themselves in hurling of stones and wood and iron; and some in handball, football, bandyball, and in Cambuck, or Cock fighting; and some also apply themselves to other dishonest games, and less profitable or useful: whereby the said realm is likely, in a short time, to become destitute of archers. We, willing to apply a seasonable remedy to this, command you, that in places in the foresaid City, as well within the liberties as without, where you shall see it expedient, you cause public proclamation to be made, that every one of the said City, strong in body, at leisure times on holidays, use in their recreations bows and arrows, or pellets, or bolts, and learn and exercise the art of shooting; forbidding all and singular on our behalf, that they do not after any manner apply themselves to the throwing of stones, wood, iron, hand-ball, foot-ball, bandy-ball, cambuck, or cock-fighting, nor such other vain plays, which have no profit in them, or concern themselves therein, under pain of imprisonment. Witness the King at Westminster, the twelfth day of June (1365).” *A Source Book of London History from the Earliest Times to 1800*, ed. P. Meadows (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd, 1914), 51–52.

30 “...avons deffendu & defendons par ces presents, tous jeux de Dez, de Tables, de Palmes, de Quilles, de Palet, de Soules, de Billes, & tous autres telz jeux, qui ne cheent point à exercer ne

subsequently ban ball, whether handball or football, coits [quoits], dice, bowling and nails [skittles], and any other ‘unthrifty’ game,³¹ which injunction was reissued by Henry IV.³² Several generations later, long after the Hundred Years War, but still concerned for the allegedly deteriorating state of the art of archery, Henry VIII, having affirmed and renewed the debarment of various games by his predecessors,³³ which debarment would be made permanent by Parliament three years later,³⁴ would ban tables, dice, cards, bowls clash, coyting, logating, or any other unlawful games out of Christmas for commoners, and in Christmas such play would be forbidden in their master’s house or in his presence; and for all manner of persons, publicly bowling outside his own gardens or orchards was

habiliter noz diz subgez, à fait & usaige d’armes, à la defense de nostredit Royaume, sur paine de quarante sols Paris, à appliquer àNous, de chascun & pour chascune foiz qu’il encherra: & voulons & ordenons, que noz diz subgez prennent, & entendent à prendre leurs jeux & esbatement, à eulz excercer & habiliter en fait de trait d’Arc ou d’Arbalestres, ès beaux lieux & places convenable à ce, ès Villes [&] Terrouoirs; & facent leurs dons au mieulx traians [tirans], & leurs festes & joies pour ce, si comme bon vous semblera” *Ordonnances des roys de France de la troisième race*, 22 vols, eds: v. 1–2, Eusèbe Jacob de Laurière; v. 2–9, Denis François Secousse; v. 10–13, Louis Guillaume de Villevault and Louis G. O. F. de Bréquigny; v. 14, L. G. O. F. de Bréquigny; v. 1520, Claude E. J. P. de Pastoret; v. 21, Jean Marie Pardessus (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1723–1849), V:172.

31 12 Rich. IIc. 6, *Statutes of the Realm [Stat Realm]*, 9 vols., ed. John Raithby (London: Record Commission, 1810–1825; reprinted with v. 10 & 11 of indexes, London: Dawson of Pall Mall, 1963) II:57. The 1963 reprint has been digitalized and is available at <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012297566> (last accessed on Feb. 8, 2019) Some quotations are taken from the text of *The Statutes at Large From the Magna Charta, to the End of the Eleventh Parliament of Great Britain, Anno 1761 (Continued to 1806)*, ed. Danby Pickering and George K. Richards. 109 vols. (Cambridge: J. Bentham, 1762–1869), accounting for slight variations in orthography. These are also available online at: <http://statutes.org.uk/site/collections/british-and-irish/pickering-statutes-at-large/> (last accessed on Feb. 8, 2019).

32 “Item, Whereas in statute made at Cant. the xii year of the reign of King the Richard, amongst other things it was accorded and assented, That the servants and labourers of husbandry, and labourers and servants of artificers, and of victuallers, should have bows and arrows, and use the same the Sundays and other festival days, and utterly leave playing at the balls, as well hand-ball as foot-ball, and other games called coits, dice, bowling, and nails, and other such unthrifty games, and that the sheriffs, mayors, bailiffs, and constables, shall have power to arrest all that do contrary, as in the said statute is more fully contained: our sovereign lord the King will, that the said statute be firmly holden and kept: joined to the same, that every such labourer or servant that doth contrary to the same statute, shall have imprisonment by six days” 11 Hen. IV c. 4, *Stat Realm* II:163; Pickering’s *Statutes at Large* III:481–2 (see note 31).

33 3 Hen. VIII c. 3, *Stat Realm*, III:25–26 (see note 31).

34 6 Hen. VIII c. 2, *Stat Realm*, III:123–24 (see note 31)..

forbidden.³⁵ All these injunctions were adopted presumably because such activities were too “distracting” from the useful pursuit of archery, the ostensible purpose of this “bill for the maintaining artillery and the debarring of unlawful games,” even as to the north, the Scottish kings James II, James III and James IV had debarred among other games, golf, and mandated archery practice.³⁶

But such strictures were not always in the name of military necessity as exemplified by the blanket prohibition on games discussed previously. The archives of various magistracies are filled with records of prosecutions for not only dice and by the late fourteenth century, cards, but also for lacrosse [field hockey], tennis and billiards. Indeed, while in the fourteenth century the favored justification was defense, the fifteenth century seems to see an increase both in ordinances and prosecutions, as growing numbers of magistrates complain how

35 “XV. Be it also enacted by the aforesaid, That no manner of artificer or craftsman of any handicraft or occupation, husbandman, apprentice, labourer, servant at husbandry, journeyman, or servant of artificer, mariners, fishermen, watermen, or any serving-man shall from the said feast of nativity of St. John Baptist, play at the tables, tennis, dice, cards, bowls, clash, coyting, logating, or any other unlawful game, out of Christmas, under the pain of xx. s. to be forfeit for every time; (2) and in Christmas, to play at any of the said games in their masters houses, or in their presence; (3) and also that no manner of persons shall at any time play at any bowl or bowls in open places out of his garden or orchard, upon pain for every time so offending, to forfeit vi.s. viii. d. ...” 33 Hen. VIII c. 9, *Stat Realm III*:837–49; Pickering’s *Statutes at Large* V:79–87 (see note 31). For other provisions of the bill for the maintaining artillery, and the debarring of unlawful games, 33 Hen. c. 9, see text accompanying notes 44 and 45 *infra*.

36 The act of the Parliament of Scotland, 6 March 1458, reads in the pertinent part: “Item it is ordanyt and decretyt that wapinschawingis be haldin be the lordis ande baronys spirituale and temporale foure tymis in the yere, and at the futbawet ande the golf be utirly cryt doune and nocht wsyt, ande at the bowe merkis be maide at all parrochkirkis, a paire of buttis, and schutting be wsyt ilk Sunday. Ande that ilk man schut sex schottis at the lest wndir the payne to be raisit apone thame that cumis nocht at the lest ii d. to be giffin to thame that cumis to the bowe merkis to the drink. And for to be wsyt fra Pasche till Alhallomess entir, ande be the nixt myd-somir [to be reddi]† with all thar geir† without sonye. And that thar be a bowar and a flegir in ilk hede towne of the schyre, and at the towne furnyse of stuf and graithe eftir the nedis tharto that he may serve the cuntre with. And as tuichande the futbaw and the golf we ordane it to be punyst be the baronys wnlawe; and gif he takis it nocht, to be tane be the kingis officiaris. †Ande gif the parrochin be mekill, that thar be iij or iiij payre of buttis in sik placis as best accordis tharfor. And ilk man within that parrochin passit xij yeris sall use schuting.” The acts of 6 May 1471 under James III and of 18 May 1491 under James IV, read in similar fashion. See also F. P. Magoun, Jr., “Football in Medieval England and in Middle-English Literature,” *The American Historical Review* 35.1 (1929): 33–45; here 45. The records of the Parliament of Scotland, both transcribed manuscripts and modern translation, are available at: <https://www.rps.ac.uk/> (last accessed on Feb. 8, 2019).

working men were abandoning their legitimate labors³⁷ and even families³⁸ to engage in games, many of which could be labelled sport, and adversely affecting the local economies in the process. Little wonder that the prevost of Paris in 1397 issued an ordinance forbidding workers and “autres de petit peuple” playing any games, including tennis, bowling, and billiards, on work days.³⁹ Part of this increased concern for play can be explained by the dissemination of new forms of game; part by the increasing affluence of an increasing portion of the population in the aftermath of the Black Death. From this standpoint, it is perhaps not surprising that we see in early treatises games and sumptuary laws discussed in the same chapter.

Ergo, like the Church, secular rulers were in many respects less concerned with what their subjects did with their money, as Le Goff suggests, than they were with what they did with their time. This paramount interest of prelates is reflected in the exceptions occasionally provided for the over-arching prohibition on games. For example, Bubczyk has noted that in Poland, where ecclesiastic authorities manifested a slightly more tolerant view of board games than did the rest of Europe, Jakub of Korzkwia Syrokomla, bishop of Plock, in the 1423 codification of diocesan law noted: “ludos taxillorum vel alearum et alios quos cumque inhonestos non exercere nisi aliquando inter se pro recreatione vel pro cena simul facienda aleam vel scaccos luderent” (Games of dice or chance and any other shameful games ought not be engaged in, although sometimes games of chance or chess may be played privately for recreation during dinnertime). During the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the statutes of some *Hôtels-Dieu* and leproseries collected by Legrand did evidence a begrudging tolerance

37 Amiens Ordinance of 1464, see Jean-Michel Mehl, *Les jeux au royaume de France du XIII^e au début du XVI^e siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), p. 363. This also appears to have been a primary concern in adoption of measures in Tournai in 1429, *ibid.* at 364; and *Extraits analytiques des anciens registres des consaux de la ville de Tournai, 1385–1422, suivis d’une analyse des documents concernant le magistrat de 1211 à 1400*, ed. H. Vandenbroeck (Tournai: H. Vandenbroeck, 1861–1863), 2:312.

38 Amiens Ordinance of 1460, though admittedly, the grievance therein appears to be a common one associated more with gambling away the family finances and leaving the impoverished family a burden on the community: “...les joueurs perdent toute la chevance qu’ils avoient et lasissoient leurs povres femmes et enfans en leur maison sans painne a vivre.” [...the players lose all the goods that they have and leave their poor wives and children at home without bread to live.] Quotation from Jean-Michel Mehl, *Les jeux au royaume de France du XIII^e au début du XVI^e siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 363.

39 Nicolas de la Mare, *Traité de la police, où l’on trouvera l’histoire de son établissement, les fonctions et les prérogatives de ses magistrats; toutes les loix et tous les réglemens qui la concernent* 4vols. (Paris: J. et P. Cot: [puis] M. Brunet: [puis] J.-F. Hérissant, 1705–1738), I:453 col. 2.

of games, making such provisions as did the leprosarium of Brives in its statutes of 1259: “Ludum autem scaccorum sine taxillis, ad solam recreationem, sine omni spe lucre, eis non inhihemus, quamvis honestius agant si se abstineant ab eodem, et idem dicemus de marrellis” [However, the game of chess without dice, solely for recreation without hope of gain, this we do not forbid, though they would act more decently if they abstained from it, and we say the same concerning marelles].⁴⁰

While revealing, as Jean-Michel Mehl observes,⁴¹ the relatively early date at which some recognition was afforded the value of recreation, that value existed only for those who either were temporarily unengaged in their routine labors, as for example, while taking meals, or who were unable to work due to infirmity. Insofar as Mehl suggests that for such persons, games were an acceptable substitute for work, however, he probably overstates the case. Nothing indicates that during this period, or for several centuries, that play was considered an acceptable substitute for productive activity. For the invalid, games simply represented a lesser alternative, preferable both for him and for caretaking staff to total inactivity. But in many respects, it emphasizes the general rule that one who is physically able to work should work. Recreation, i.e., revivification, was for the sick or weary. And in some cases, even for those incapacitated from work either physically or legally, the luxury of games depended on status. For example, by ordinance of October 1485, prisoners in the Chastelet were prohibited from playing dice; however, persons of birth and station were permitted the luxury of playing chess or tric trac, a French form of backgammon.⁴²

Notwithstanding these efforts, by the sixteenth century, a certain leniency toward games not involving chance can be detected even among the clergy. In 1528, the Council of Sens finally conceded, albeit rather back-handedly, to the clergy permission to play any games other than those of chance, so long as they never played in public.⁴³ And the fondness of Francis I for tennis, causing

⁴⁰ *Statuts d'hôtels-Dieu et de léproseries: recueil de textes du XIIIe au XIVe siècle*, ed. Léon Le Grand (Paris: Picard et fils, 1901), 210.

⁴¹ Jean-Michel Mehl, *Les jeux au royaume de France* (see note 37), 369.

⁴² Nicolas de la Mare, *Traité de la police* (see note 39), I:457 col. 1.

⁴³ “Neque in publico ludant pila, aut aliis ludis, maxime cum laicis. A ludos alearum, aliisque, qui a sorte pendent, abstineant: neque ludentium fautores, spectatores, aut testes existent.” Concilium Senonense (1528), Caput XXV, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. Gian Domenico Mansi, Philippe Labbe, Jean B. Martin, Gabriel Cossart, Louis Petit, and E Baluze. 59 vols. (Paris: H. Welter, 1901–1927), vol. 58, XXXII, c. 1194. Forty-three years earlier, the Council of Sens in 1485 had taken a harsher tone towards *jeux pernicious, indécentes et mal-honnêtes*: “Cum es debito nostril pastoralis officii juxta canonicas sanctiones, teneamur ludos perniciosos, indecentes, & inhonestos, quorum occasione sub quadam curialitatis aut consola-

him to encourage it not only among the aristocracy but commoners as well, is widely known. Even in the case of the 1541 bill for the maintaining artillery and the debarring of unlawful games previously discussed, it was recognized that masters could license their servants to play at cards, dice or tables, with their master or any other gentleman, in the master's presence or in his house⁴⁴; and further, that any nobleman or other holders of manors, lands, tenements, or other yearly profits, personally or through his wife, of one hundred pounds or more, could license his servants or family, to play at cards, dice, tables, bowls or tennis, on the premises of his house, gardens or orchards.⁴⁵

tionis imagine ad dissolutionis materiam devenitur, ab ecclesia & ecclesiasticis, praesertim in factis ordinibus constitutis, extirpare atque abjicere, & delinquents in talibus coerce: attendentes, circa ludos taxillorum, alearum, & alios, jam plura a sanctis patribus constituta, & in nostris provincialibus conciliis ordinate, quae a multis hodie penitus negliguntur: omnibus episcopis, & aliis ad quos spectat delinquents & scandala in talibus facientes corrigere, specialiter injungimus, quatenus constituta a sanctis patribus & Romanis pontificibus, saepius ecclesiasticis sibi commissis insinuat, & insinuari procurent: sacerdotes & alios in sacris ordinibus constitutos ad taxillos publicare aut consuetudinarie ludere non verentes, per suspensions ad tempus ab officio & beneficio, per excommunicationem in locis publica saepius promulgandam, & alias, debite & rigide coercendo. Alios vero non sic publicos, nec consuetudinarios, per applicationem unius libras ceras parochiali vel cathedrali ecclesiae pro qualibet vice, qua ludendum duxerint ad taxillos, & alias aribtrarie puniendo. Aleatores vero, seu ad aleas luentes, praesertim illos qui in publicis locis, in ostiis, & operatories laicorum, in scandalum status ecclesiastici ludere non verentur, aut qui ad palmam seu pilam in camisia, & alias inhoneste & inverecunde, publice consuetudinarie ludere non verecundantur aut formidant, ordinarii & alii ad quos spectat, saepius commoneant, & contemptores suarum monitionum sic poenis legitimis coerceant, quod ceteris cedere valeat in exemplum." Concilium Senonense (1485), Caput VIII, Mansi XXXII, cc. 423–24.

44 "XXII. Provided also, and be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That it shall be lawful for every master to license his or their servants to play at cards, dice or tables with their said master, or with any other gentleman repairing to their said master, openly in his or their house, or in his or their presence, according to his or their discretion; (2) and that it shall be lawful to every such servant, for every time so being commanded or licensed by his said master, as is aforesaid, to play at cards, dice or tables with his said master, or other gentleman so to him repairing; any thing in his act to the contrary notwithstanding." 33 Hen.VIII.c.9 (see note 35). For other provisions of this bill, see note 35 above and note 45 following, along with accompanying text.

45 "XXIII. Provided also, and be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That it shall be lawful to every nobleman and other, having manors, lands, tenements, or other yearly profits, for term of life in his own right, or in his wife's right, to the yearly value of an hundred pounds or above, to command, appoint or license, by his or their discretion, his or their servants, or family of his or their house or houses, for to play within the precinct of his or their houses, gardens or orchards, at cards, dice tables, bowls or tennis, as well amongst themselves as other repairing to the same house or houses; (2) and that they so playing by commandment, appointment or license, as is aforesaid, shall not incur any danger or penalty contained in this act for the same; this act or any

Nonetheless, throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, ordinances continued to issue, frequently interdicting new games, as creative minds catered to the passions of a gaming public, and in the process added to the growing list of table and card games, some new activities such as billiards, banned by ordinance of 1655,⁴⁶ or the pernicious game of *hocca*, notorious for despoiling many of the great houses of Europe.⁴⁷ At the same time, the aversion to gambling as a theological or philosophic principle began to wear thin as states discovered the fiscal potential of some games of chance, most visibly the state lottery. Towns in the Pays-Bas had begun to use municipal lotteries to fund building projects and aid the poor early in the fifteenth century, if not before.⁴⁸ The Italian city-states began to use lotteries to finance wars by the middle of the fifteenth century, and it was there that Francis I on campaign during his Italian wars became acquainted with the revenue device, instituting at the instigation of the French chancellor, Guillaume Poyet, the first *Loterie Royale* by the edict of Châteauneuf in 1539, which endeavor proved a total failure.⁴⁹ Thereafter, for two centuries lotteries in France were variously permitted, forbidden, tolerated, or instituted. In the same vein, one may mention Il Ridotto, established by Venice in 1638 as a government-owned gambling house, until its closure by the Great Council in 1774, partially at the behest of reformers such as Giorgio Pisani, but primarily because of its ill effects impoverishing the aristocracy,⁵⁰ thereby confirming the dire assessments of gambling by eighteen-hundred years of Western rulers.

thing therein contained to the contrary thereof in any wise not withstanding.” 33 Hen.VIII.c.9 (see note 35).

⁴⁶ Police ordinance of April 6, 1665. See Nicolas de la Mare *Traité de la police* (see note 39), I:460. This ordinance seems more directed toward billiard parlours than anyone rich enough to have a personal billiard room, but it also seems to suggest that the game had been added to the list of proscribed pastimes along with dice and cards.

⁴⁷ See the immediately preceding footnote, at 460–61. It is not at all clear whether “hocca” refers to the game of hoca, a forerunner of the game of roulette, or to basset, also called barbacole, since both seem to have developed in Italy in the seventeenth century and both were notorious for high stakes capable of bankrupting even the most prestigious of noble families.

⁴⁸ See Jeroen Puttevils, “The Lure of Lady Luck: Lotteries and Economic Culture in the Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Low Countries,” *Random Riches: Gambling Past & Present*, ed. Manfred Zollinger (London: Routledge, 2016), ch. 3. On the Italian origins of state lotteries, see Friedrich Endemann, “Beitraege zur Geschichte der Lotterie und zum heutigen Lotterierecht,” Ph.D. diss., Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, 1882, 33–41.

⁴⁹ Maurice Deubel, “Guillaume Poyet, avocat et chancelier,” thèse pour le doctorat en droit: Université de Nancy, 1900, 94–95.

⁵⁰ David G. Schwartz, *Roll the Bones: The History of Gambling* (Las Vegas, NV: Winchester Books, 2013), 92–106.

The failure, at least in the *longue durée*, of attempts to control recreational activities, points to the fact that in expanding monetary-commodity economies, despite the Western hostility Le Goff identifies toward *otium*, except perhaps among the aristocracy, contrary to earlier shibboleths, there was a corresponding development among an expanding pool of subjects of what could be called prototypical “leisure time” subject to diminishing control by Church or State. In particular, this notion seems to gain a certain currency by the beginning of the eighteenth century, when such notables as Nicolas de La Mare, the police commissioner of Paris and author of the multivolume *Traité de la Police*,⁵¹ a monument in the history and development of *Polizeiwissenschaft*, recognizes that regulation of games is a police matter only when it reaches a level of criminal activity endangering the general public, but noting further that someone who “takes this recreation at home being with his family, or several of his friends, at a decent hour, represents nothing that wounds morality, nor anything inconvenient against the public order.”⁵²

After a lengthy discussion of what we would call today the psychological benefits of games, or perhaps better yet, entertainment, since he includes public spectacles such as the theater in his discussion, he provides a taxonomy of private games, the first group being those that exercise body or mind and depend on skill; the second being those that depend on chance alone; and the third group being those that have some combination of skill and luck. The first group, including games such as archery, marksmanship, carousels, jousting, tournaments, tennis and billiards, but also chess and any other games determined only by mind and erudition, were permitted. The second, being those historically associated as *alea*, were forbidden. The third category, into which he placed most card games and tric trac, although sometimes permitted, sometimes forbidden, were generally to be tolerated as respectable entertainment when played with friends or family.⁵³ It is only fair to note that the commissioner,

51 *Traité de la police* (see note 39).

52 “... que l’on prenne cette recreation chez loy avec sa famille, ou quelques-uns de ses amis, à bonne heure, il n’y a rien là qui blesse la pureté des mœurs, ny aucun inconvenient contre l’ordre public...” *Traité de la Police* (see note 39), Livre III, Titre IV, Ch. III, p. 451, col. 1.

53 “Il ne reste donc dans nostre systeme que les jeux d’actions, & ceux-cy se subdivisent encore en trois differentes especes, qui ont donné lieu dans la Police à autant de different Loix. Les uns sont totalement composez d’exercices du corps ou de l’esprit & ne demandent que l’intelligence, de l’adresse ou de l’agilité pour y réussir; d’autres ne dépendant que du hazard tout pur. Il y en a enfin de mixtes où la hazard & l’adresse se trouvent mêlez ensemble, & n’y peuvent réussir l’un sans l’autre. Les premiers sont permis, les seconds sont défendus, & les troisièmes sont tolerez.....La Paume, le Mail & tous les autres semblables jeux qui exercent le corps, le fortifient, & le conservent en santé: les jeux de l’Arc de l’Arbeletre, de Arquebuse, du Billard, les Joustes, les

being rather *politique* himself, placed lotteries in a class by themselves, those being generally a consequence of public policy sanctioned by the prince.⁵⁴

In France, the successors of Delamare when addressing *jeux* as a law enforcement matter, typically would have in mind specifically illegal activity. For example, Edme de La Poix de Fréminville, notaire royal, bailli de la ville et du marquisat de la Pallisse and Commissaire en droits seigneuriaux, perhaps best known for his vociferous defense of seignorial rights,⁵⁵ composed a noted “dictionary” for use of magistrates and police.⁵⁶ Under the entry on “games,” he gathers a number of ordinances and judgments issued between 1708 and 1740 illustrative of the legitimate concerns of contemporary law enforcement. For example, the parliamentary ordinance of February 1708,⁵⁷ is specifically designed to address the growing numbers of those who under the pretext of selling cheap goods devote themselves to conducting illicit games of chance.⁵⁸ These questionable characters are but what we today would call confidence men,

Tournois, les Carrousel, qui ne demandent que de l'adresse, les Echecs enfin, & tous les autres jeux où il n'entre que de l'esprit & de l'erudition, sont tous de cette premier espece La seconde comprend tous les jeux que les Romains nommoient *alea*, & que nous appellons jeux de hazard La troisième espece de jeux enfin comprend ceux où il entre de l'art & de l'esprit, autant & quelquefois plus que du fort ou du hazard. Le plus grande partie des jeux de Cartes, & celui du Trictrac, sont de ce nombre. Ceux-cy ont esté autrefois condamnez, parce que le hazard y domine toujours; cependant comme il y entre aussi beaucoup d'esprit & d'adresse, ils sont à present tolerez, & l'usage de plusieurs siecles les a autorisez en faveur des recreations honnestes que des gens sages prennent quelquefois chez eux, dans leurs familles, ou avec leurs amis.” *Traité de la Police* (see note 39), Livre III, Titre IV, Ch. II, p. 448, col. 2–449, col. 2.

54 “Mais il reste encore quatre autres especes de Loteries qui ont esté beaucoup pratiquées dans ces derniers temps. Les premieres peuvent ester nommées des Lotties politiques ou d'Estat; les seconds, des Loteries de charité; les troisièmes, des Loteries de commerce; & les quatrièmes, des Loteries de jeu. ... Aucune de ces Loteries, à l'exception des derniers, ne peut ester faite sans l'autorité du prince; ainsi ce jeu ou ce commerce a cela de particulier, qu'il est quelquefois permis & quelquefois défendu, selon les temps, les besoins, ou les autres circonstances qui le rendent plus ou moins necessaire, ou favorable.” *Traité de la Police* (see note 39), Livre III, Titre IV, Ch. II, p. 450, col. 2.

55 See, e.g., his *La pratique universelle, pour la rénovation des terriers et des droits seigneuriaux*, 5 vols. (Paris: Morel et Gisse 1746–1757).

56 *Dictionnaire ou Traité de la police générale des villes, bourgs, paroisses et seigneuries de la campagne*, nouvelle edition (1758; Paris: chez les associés au privilège des ouvrages de l'auteur, 1771).

57 *Dictionnaire* (see note 56), 384–87; also, Louis-François de Jouy, *Arrests de règlement* (Paris: Durand & Pissot, 1752), 259–62.

58 “... qui sous prétexte de débiter quelques marchandises de peu de valeur, y donnent publiquement à jouer, soit aux Cartes, ou aux Dez, ou à tirer un Livre, ou à d'autres jeux également prohibés.” *Dictionnaire* (see note 56), 384–85.

and “the games they present to uncouth and ignorant people are full of snares and tricks, by which they are always assured of winning whenever they please, without ever running any risk of losing.”⁵⁹

The result of these fraudulent practices results not only in the impoverishment of the victims and their families, but quarrels and violence that disturb the peace and tranquility of the community. Hence, it is ordered that the proper authorities seize such persons and imprison them, as well as confiscating their horses, merchandise, equipment along with any winnings, and when liquidated apply the proceeds to *Hôtels-Dieu* or *Hôpitaux*. Furthermore, recidivists should be subject to corporal punishment.⁶⁰

Another *arrêt* dated 12 February 1710 was directed primarily to closing down the gambling “academies” or “assemblies” that were being conducted in establishments and shops the same as in the markets.⁶¹ The nature of these shops is illuminated by a sentence of the police of Châtelet de Paris, enjoining all types of innkeepers and vendors of beer or brandy or others from conducting any games, whether it be of dice, cards, checkers, chess, solitaire, and generally all sorts of games on the premises, on pain of a 500 livres fine and closure of their establishments for six months.⁶² Lest one exaggerate the significance of the injunction against chess and checkers, the context is manifest from an equivalent police ordinance dated 30 January 1737, that makes clear that the injunction against innkeepers, coffee-shops, and merchants of wine, applies to games of chance, whether pair-games or not.⁶³ The concern in ordinance after ordinance, is that operation of gaming parlors, frequently under the auspices of conducting a lawful business, attracts vagabonds and idlers and gives the place a surplus of thefts, frauds and surprises.⁶⁴ Nothing in all the collected *arrêts* suggests that

59 “... que tous les Jeux qu'ils présentent à des personnes grossieres & ignorantes, sont pleins de pieges & de trumperies, par lesquelles ils sont toujours assures de gagner quand il leur plait, sans courir jamais aucun risqué de perdre ...” *Dictionnaire* (see note 56), 385.

60 *Dictionnaire* (see note 56), 386.

61 Louis-François de Jouy, *Arrests de règlement* (Paris: Durand & Pissot, 1752), 262–64.

62 “...qui fait defenses à tous Limonadiers, Traiteurs, Cabaretiers, Aubergistes, Vendeurs de Biere & d'Eau-de vie, & autres, de donner à jouer à aucun Jeu, soit de Dez, ou de Cartes, mêmes aux Dames, Echecs, Solitaires, & généralement toutes sortes de Jeux, à peine de 500 livres d'amende, & leurs boutiques fermées pendant six semaines.” *Dictionnaire* (see note 56), 387.

63 “... Ordonnance de Police qui fait defenses à tous Limonadiers, Cafés, Marchands de Vin & autres, de souffrir que l'on joue chez eux aux Jeux de Pair ou non, aux Dez & autres Jeux de hazard, sous peine de 3000 livres d'amende, & 1000 livres contre chaque particulier qui y fera trouvé jouant auxdits Jeux.” *Dictionnaire* (see note 56), 387–88.

64 “...sous prétexte d'y faire un négoce permis, tenoient ci-devant dans leurs boutiques des assemblées de Jeux défendus, tant au-dedans qu'au dehors de la Foire, ce qui y attiroit des vag-

games outside the contexts of confidence schemes or gaming parlors are enjoined *per se*.

The only other category of games that are widely enjoined, and those essentially on the basis of location, are activities such as *bâtonnet*, *cochonnet* or *quilles*, which involve the hurling of sticks or balls, or similar dangers, which can inconvenience or injure passers-by, break shop windows and cause other mishaps, and hence were typically forbidden in streets and public places.⁶⁵ Not infrequently, these calamities were brought about by groups of children playing in the right-of-way and involved the shattering of street lamps.⁶⁶ For such damage and penalties, parents were responsible for their children, and masters and mistresses for their shop-boys, apprentices and domestics.⁶⁷

Gone from these sources are prior concerns that games are a waste of time and an economic strain on local communities or are morally objectionable because they distract players from their proper calling. Indeed, with the exception of the occasional injunction against public blasphemies or obscenities, or publicly playing during the hours of Sunday or holy day church services, the police regulations manifest a distinct disinterest in what people do on their own time, as long as it does not attract or further criminal activity inimical to the safety and security of civil society.

Indeed, to the contrary, Delamare recognizes in his treatise not only a private, but a public benefit, to what can reasonably be labelled a prototypical “leisure” time, most suitably the etymological prolix of the Gallicized *loisir*, from the Latin, *licere*, to permit. Whether this is a true philosophic conversion or simply a recognition of reality and a consideration that efficient deployment of the limited

abonds & des fainéans, & donnoit lieu à quantité de vols, de frauds & de surprises ...” Ordonnance de Police du 7 Janvier 1743, *Dictionnaire* (see note 56), 388.

65 “Tous ces Jeux dans les rues & places publiques sont défendus, parce qu’ils peuvent incommoder & blesser les passans, casser les vitres des Bourgeois, & autres accidens,” *Dictionnaire* (see note 56), 391.

66 See, e.g., Sentence of the Police of Châtelet de Paris, 16 January 1728, wherein it is recited “... qu’il trouva sur les onze heures du matin dans ladite rue des Vieilles-Thuilleries dix ou douze enfans qui y jouoient au bâtonnet, & qui casserent en sa presence deux des Lanternes de ladite rue ...” *Dictionnaire* (see note 56), 391.

67 “... faisons defenses à toutes personnes de l’un & de l’autre sexe, de s’attrouper dans les rues, d’y jouer au Bâtonnet ou autres Jeux don’t les passans puissent être incommodes, ou les Lanternes publique cassées, à peine de deux cens lives d’amende couteur chacun des contrevenans, même de prison, & autres peines, si le cas y échet, desquelles peines les peres & meres pour leurs enfans, & les Maîtres & Maîtresses pour leurs Garçons de Boutiques, Apprentiss & Domestiques seront responsables...” Sentence of 16 January 1728. *Dictionnaire*, p. 392. To the same effect, see Police Ordinance of 16 October 1736, and Police Ordinance of 9 September 1740, *Dictionnaire* (see note 56), 392–93 and 393–94, respectively.

resources of the state will not permit the policing of every home and every private gathering is more difficult to say, although a fair reading of the treatise suggests a combination of the two. It would be for the materialist *Philosophes*, excluding perhaps d'Holbach who arguably eschewed psychological hedonism,⁶⁸ to conflate the relaxation and renewal characterizing leisure with virtuous *plaisir*, the entry on which Diderot's *Encyclopedie* would wax poetic noting that:

A voir un joueur d'échecs concentré en lui-même, insensible à tout ce qui frappe ses yeux ses oreilles, ne le croiroit-on pas intimement occupé du soin de sa fortune ou du salut de l'état? Ce recueillement si profond a pour objet le Plaisir d'exercer l'esprit par la position d'une piece d'ivoire. Cest ce doux exercice de l'esprit que naît l'agrément des pensées fines. ...⁶⁹

[To see a player of chess concentrate on himself, insensible to all that which strikes his eyes and ears, would one not think that he was intimately occupied with his fortune or with the health of the state? This attention so profound has for its object the pleasure of exercising the spirit by the position of a piece of ivory. It is that sweet exercise of the spirit that pleasure is born from acute thought.]

The game – play – which for medieval prelates and princes had been properly but a means to a greater end, had become an end in itself.

⁶⁸ See, e.g., Hasse Hämäläinen, "The *Philosophes*' Criticism of d'Holbach's Non-Hedonistic Materialism," *Diametros* 54 (2017): 56–75.

⁶⁹ *Encyclopédie*, article "Plaisir," quoted in John Dunkley, "Les jeux de hazard et la loi au XVIII^e siècle," *Le jeu au XVIII^e siècle: Colloque d'Aix-en-Provence (30 avril, 1^{er} et 2 mai 1971)*. Centre Aix-ois d'Etudes et de Recherches sur le XVIII^e Siècle (Aix-en-Provence: EDISUD, 1976).

Michael A. Conrad

Randomization in Paper: Shuffling as a Material Practice with Moral Implications in the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern World

But, on the other hand, it is exactly for this reason that card-playing is so demoralizing, since the whole object of it is to employ every kind of trick and machination in order to win what belongs to another. And a habit of this sort, learnt at the card-table, strikes root and pushes its way into practical life; and in the affairs of every day a man gradually comes to regard *meum* and *tuum* in much the same light as cards, and to consider that he may use to the utmost whatever advantages he possesses, so long as he does not come within the arm of law.¹

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860)

God, a Card Dealer

Shuffling and dealing playing cards are essential to all card games – so much so that it is rather surprising how little this randomization practice was described before the eighteenth century. References of its mere existence are scarce in the literature of the late Middle Ages and the early modern world. That card games required some kind of randomization, however, was no mystery and often addressed at least implicitly. Andreas Strobl's *Geistliches Kartenspiel* (1696) – literally, *The Spiritual Card Game* – demonstrates that even at that time the allusion to randomization was still rather implicit, while little attention was devoted to the technical details. In this work, Strobl, who was the parish priest of Saint Jacob in “Püchbach,” today Buchbach northeast of Munich, Bavaria, compares the fate of people with a card game in which God takes on the role of a card dealer:

¹ Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipmena: A Collection of Philosophical Essays*, trans. T. Bailey Saunders (1851; New York: Cosimo, 2007), 29. I very much thank Dr. Mildred Budny (Research Group on Manuscript Evidence) for her help with copy-editing this article and for her kind advice.

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In der Wahrheit die Ständ der Menschen werden wie vermischte Karten außgetheilet / frage ein Spillender / warumben bald das schlechteste / bald das höchste Blat ihme erfolge / die Usach wird auff das blinde Glück geländet / frage auch der Mensch / warumben disem ein Königs-Cron / dem andere ein Bauren-Hut / disem die Reichthumen nach Überfluß / jenem der armseelige Bettelstab zu theil worden / die Antwort wird seyn, der Allmächtige Gott lasse ihme nicht in die Karten sehen / nicht nach eigener Wahl / sondern gleichsamb nach dem Loß müssen wir vnseren Lebens Stand von der Hand Gottes empfangen vnd annehmen. ...

[In truth, the estates of people are distributed like shuffled cards. / If a player asks / why he receives the worst of hands one time, / the best at others, / the reason is blind luck. / Equally, one might ask / why a royal crown will be bestowed upon this person, / whereas another will obtain a peasant's hat, / another abounding wealth, / and yet another a beggar's staff, / the answer (always) is that God Almighty never allows us to see his hand. / It (thus) is not by our own will, / but by lot that we are obliged to receive and accept our lives' estates from God's proper hand.^{2]}

“God Almighty never lets us see his hand” – “Der Allmächtige Gott lasse ihme nicht in die Karten sehen”. To conceive the distribution of happy and unhappy events in one's own life as an opaque and unfathomable process belongs to a primordial experience collectively shared among humankind. All discourse of “fortune” and “bad fortune,” the mere mention of an external distributing force named “fate,” is built upon presupposed and arbitrary values and notions. In such a case, the distribution of playing cards entails an act of distributing social roles in accordance with divine providence. It is up to humanity to accept its hand, its fate, with the consequential pressure of having to play one's cards as skillfully as possible. Only God entertains complete insight into the cosmological order, a knowledge that He does not share fully with us. Instead, information is revealed to humans only through an epistemological process, here identified with the process of playing which, however, will always remain partial and in line with the game's rules, rules that Strobl equates with those of the social and political order. In doing so, he echoes the much earlier metaphysical deliberations of Boethius (ca. 477–524), who in his *Consolatio Philosophiae* (ca. 525) had described the workings of blind fate, of Goddess Fortuna, as a continuous game at a Wheel of Fortune (*hunc continuum ludum ludimus*), the *rota fortunae*,

² Andreas Strobl, *Der Anderte Theil oder Zusatz deß Geistlichen Karten-Spills / Zu welchem Die übrige Blätter / oder junge Karten / Als nemblich / Die Sechser / Fümffer / Vierer / vnd Dreyer / Hertz- Schell- Gruen- vnd Aichel-Farb gehoerig* (...) (Salzburg: Melchior Haan, 1696), 47–48; this and all following translations by the author, unless otherwise noted.

a game whose rules – “*ludicri mei ratio*” – cannot be changed, but only accepted and endured.³

Of the many attributes the Romans had formerly ascribed to Goddess Fortuna, Boethius thereby only kept the one of her wheel that, with its steady and never-ending motion, determines life's ups and downs.⁴ This conception of fate as an inescapable, cyclical as well as cynical, game is poignantly expressed in one of the songs contained in the *Carmina Burana* (ca. 1220/1230): “O Fortuna, velut Luna / statu variabilis, / semper crescis aut decrescis; / vita detestabilis / nunc obdurat et tunc curat / ludo mentis aciem, / egestatem, / potestatem / dissolvit ut glaciem” (Oh, Fortune, / like the moon / that is constantly changing, / you are always waxing / or waning, / despicable for your changeful nature. / For your amusement [*ludo*] you now harden, / now soften / the keen edge of your intentions, / melting poverty / or power / like ice).⁵ Seemingly autonomous, in the framework of Christianity Fortuna was nonetheless conceived of as the agent of divine providence and subordinated to God's will, which Boethius had already acknowledged in the fifth book of his treatise, thus balancing providence and fate.

However, it is not Strobl's intention to insinuate that human beings were completely disempowered and desperately subject to the twists and turns of fate. On the contrary, even though he admits the reality of contingent events

3 “Haec nostra vis est, hunc continuum ludum ludimus: rotam volubili orbe versamus, infirma summis, summis infimis mutare gaudemus. Ascende, si placet, sed ea lege, ne, uti cum ludicri mei ratio poscet, descendere iniuriam putes,” Boethius, *Consolatio Philosophiae*, Latin and German (Zurich: Artemis & Winkler, 2004), II, 29–33; and “Nos ad constantiam nostris moribus alienam inexplata hominum cupiditas alligabit? Haec nostra vis est, hunc continuum ludum ludimus: rotam volubili orbe versamus, infima summis, summa infimis mutare gaudemus. Ascende, si placet, sed ea lege, ne, uti cum ludicri mei ratio poscet, descendere iniuriam putes” (II, 48).

4 Alfred Doren, “Fortuna im Mittelalter und in der Renaissance,” *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg*, vol. II: *Vorträge 1922–1923*. Part I (Wiesbaden: Springer, 1924), 71–144; here 81. The image of the Wheel of Fortune already existed in antiquity; see, e.g., M. Tullius Cicero, *Against Piso*, id., *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, ed. and trans. by Charles Duke Yonge (London: George Bell & Sons, 1891), ch. 22. Fortuna's blindness is, for instance, mentioned in M. Tullius, *M. Antonium orationes Philippicae*, id., *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, ed. and trans. by Charles Duke Yonge (London: George Bell & Sons, 1903), 13.10. On the iconography of the *rota fortunae*, see Petra Weigel, “Die Rota Fortunae: Von der Beständigkeit des Wandels und der Unsicherheit des Glücks,” *Atlas der Weltbilder*, ed. Christoph Marksches, Ingeborg Reichle, Jochen Brüning, and Peter Deuffhard. Forschungsberichte / Interdisziplinäre Arbeitsgruppen, Berlin–Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 25 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011), 102–17.

5 *Carmina Burana*, Latin and English, trans. and ed. David A. Traill, vol. 1. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 48 (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2018), song no. 17, 50–53; here 50–51.

that burst into our lives unwanted, he emphasizes that we can develop skills for coping with contingency and to turn contingent events into something productive and helpful – which exactly is the reason why he chose card games as a model and not, for instance, dice games. Most card games involve a blend of chance and skill, which Strobl evokes with the catchy rhyme of “Gunst und Kunst” – Grace and Art. In fact, in his view these properties balance the game, and grant it equality and justice. In Christian thought, grace is a divine force whose time of appearance stands outside human control. In Strobl’s text, it is related to contingent events in games that support or spoil the intentions of players. In game terminology, grace represents the ambivalence of chance as good or bad luck. It is an equalizing moment, as it avoids the chance that more advanced players might use their experience to outsmart less advanced players. Shuffling and distributing cards is a technique for equalizing unequal players, for providing them with similar chances to win.

As I have noted above, like many other medieval and early modern authors, Strobl does not inform us about how shuffling should be executed exactly, let alone what shuffling techniques yield the best randomization. To give a further example: The *Loszbuch aus der Karten gemacht*,⁶ written by an unknown author and printed in Strasbourg by the publisher Matthias Schürer between 1506 and 1520,⁷ uses the order of a German card deck to organize and illustrate forty-eight eight-line poems for the purpose of bibliomancy. Forty-eight was the number of a standard German card deck with four suit symbols of Hearts, Bells, Acorns, and Leaves, each of which equally contained twelve cards. The texts are mostly identical with those from the older *Losbuch* by Martin Flach (1485), with a main difference being that it counts altogether fifty-two poems, with each being dedicated to an emblematic animal.⁸ The numeral difference highlights how important

⁶ The title is difficult to translate because the term *Losbuch* has no equivalent in English. As it refers to a genre of mantic literature that employs some kind of sortition, a free translation of the short title would be *Book on Fortune Telling by Lots, Based on Cards* (also see note 7).

⁷ *Eyn loszbuch aus der Karten gemacht / Und alleyn durch kurtzweyl erdacht / wer aber zu glauben sich daran wolt keren / Das selbig ließ sich vnrecht leren*, Photolithographische Reproduction des einzigen bekannten Exemplars (...), ed. Adolf Hofmeister (Rostock: Volckmann & Jerosch, 1890). On the genre of bibliomantic *Losbücher*, see Marco Heiles, *Das Losbuch: Manuskriptologie einer Textsorte des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts*. Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, Beihefte, 83 (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2018). An edition of such texts, including the *Losbuch* by Martin Flach (1485), ed. and commented by this author, is in the process of being published in *Gedruckte Losbücher des 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Björn Reich and Matthias Standke (Stuttgart: S. Hirzel, 2019).

⁸ Only little is known about Martin Flach’s biography. For some further information on his life and works, see the references in note 7.

the connection to a deck of cards was for the anonymous author of the *Loszbuch aus der Karten gemacht*. The epilogue, which also differs from the older source, gives instructions – albeit somewhat obscure – for how to use the book. Without saying so explicitly, the context makes clear that the author implicitly refers to a deck of cards, with the cards being placed face down:

Der nun woll wissen disses buchleins art
 Und wie einer darauß werde gelart
 Der treib oder wend vmb die hant
 So thut dir bald der vinger bekannt
 Er deut dir schwartz oder weiß
 So vindestu mit gantzem fleiß
 Eyn zall darhynder die dir do zeyget
 Eyn farb der sie ist zugeeyget
 Und der seyn vier auff einer karten
 Darnach bedenck vnd vernym
 Und merck dir farb vnd die zal
 Und such im buch vberal
 wo du dan sollich bald vindest
 Darnach du dir wol selber kundest
 So du dir dein complex list
 Und was auch dein planet ist
 Oder was du yebangen hast
 Oder in was händel du ye wast ...

[Who now wants to know this little book's meaning
 And how to receive its wisdom
 May twist or turn their hand,
 So the finger soon will announce,
 Point out in black and white,
 To find in greatest accuracy,
 A number below, indicating
 A suit symbol to which it belongs,
 Of which there are four on each card.
 After that, bethink and mark,
 Remember suit and number,
 And search the book all over,
 Wherein such you shall find,
 By which you may discern for yourself
 The list of your complex,
 And what your planet is,
 Or what you have to fear,
 Or what quarrels you've met ...]⁹

9 *Eyn loszbuch aus der Karten gemacht* (see note 7), 15.

Of course, it would be possible to open just a random page of the book and blindly finger-pick a stanza. However, the reference to card games in the content of many poems and the epilogue of the *Loszbuch*, together with the use of card suits as a formal device for organizing the book highlights that a preferred method would have been to randomly pick a card from a stack. Again, this would have presupposed some kind of shuffling or other randomization method not mentioned in the text. In both examples, intentional randomization serves as a mechanism for equalizing what is otherwise unequal. Chance is conceived of as an indifferent and, therefore, incorruptible judge over human affairs. Although a mechanical procedure, randomization carries moral implications. Realizing those moral intentions helps to decode what Strobl had implicitly presupposed as a criterion for the best randomization possible: After its execution, most or even all cards should have changed their positions. Yet he leaves open what practice would guarantee this outcome. One reason might simply be that this has been and continues to be an unsolved problem: Even today, mathematicians have not found a satisfying answer regarding what shuffling technique yields the best randomization possible. In fact, they are not even certain about how to quantify the degree of randomization in a given card stack or if a deck is to be regarded well-shuffled after five or seven riffles.¹⁰ As a result, there is still no reliable technology for generating fully randomized card stacks, even though automatized card shufflers have been in existence at least since the nineteenth century.¹¹ So far, ‘washing the deck’ is still considered the technique with the best results, which is why it is normally used in casinos for the first shuffle of new decks.

10 David Aldous und Persi Diaconis, “Shuffling Cards and Stopping Times,” *American Mathematical Monthly* 93.5 (1986): 333–48. Persi Diaconis, Ronald L. Graham, and William M. Kantor, “The Mathematics of Perfect Shuffles,” *Advances in Applied Mathematics* 4.2 (1983): 175–96; Persi Diaconis, “Mathematical Developments from the Analysis of Riffle Shuffling Always Capitalize,” *Groups, Combinatorics and Geometry*, ed. A. A. Ivanov, M. W. Liebeck, and J. Saxl (River Edge, NJ, London, Singapore, et al.: World Scientific, 2003), 73–98; Persi Diaconis, “The Mathematics of Mixing Things Up,” *Journal of Statistical Physics* 144 (2011): 445–58; Brad Mann, “How Many Times Should You Shuffle a Deck of Cards?,” *Undergraduate Mathematics and Its Applications* 15.4 (1994): 303–32. L. N. Trefethen, L. M. Trefethen, “How Many Shuffles to Randomize a Deck of Cards?,” *Proceedings of the Royal Society, ser. A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* 456 (2002): 2561–568.

11 Henry C. Ash, “Improvement in Apparatus for Shuffling Cards,” U.S. Patent Office, no. 205,030, June 18, 1878, application filed May 8, 1878; patented in England, December 27, 1877.

Shuffling and Randomization

Randomization is a very old cultural and rather strange cultural technology, given that its goal is to create disorder intentionally, which, as a destructive practice, seems to contradict the very meaning of ‘culture’ as something constructive or nourishing. It can rightfully be called ‘diabolic,’ not only for historic reasons, but also due to the original sense of the word: the devil, διάβολος, *diabolus*, is the one who confounds, who literally scatters things, throws (βάλλειν) them around and tears them apart (δια-βάλλειν), thus causing confusion (*confundere*).¹² Therefore it seems that randomization must be the Devil’s realm by default. And indeed, just as with other randomization techniques, shuffling parallels the tickling excitement of following a perverse, diabolic ritual. To mess with an order and deliberately transform it into chaos seems to relate to some of the darker, more destructive parts of our souls. Moreover, the aspect of a ballistic motion, best captured in the ancient Greek word, also re-appears in the etymology of the English word ‘random.’ The Middle English *raundon*, derived from Old French *randir* – to gallop – a word of Frankish origin that referred to an impetuous force or roving motion, a meaning now obsolete, but still attestable in the sixteenth century, when ‘at random’ signified ‘at great speed.’¹³ Such erratic and turbulent motion mirrors the lack of control in chance. Likewise, randomness entails the absence of direction and control; something random appears as if scattered everywhere and nowhere, seemingly untidily.

12 Among the many meanings of *confundere*, only a few shall be pointed out: to pour, to mix, mingle, unite, combine, blend, to bring together, blur, or jumble, but also, with an affective and moral implication: to upset, confuse, to bring into disorder, to fail to keep distinct, to ruin, destroy, to dismay; cf. the entries on “confundō,” “confundere” or “confusio” in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P. G. W. Glare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

13 The root of the Old French word is Frankish and thus Germanic. There was a word *rinnan* in Gothic and *renna* in Old Norse, both meaning ‘to run, flow,’ connected to Old English *rinnan*, ‘to run,’ through a Proto-Germanic root **rinnan*, from which also Old High German *rinnan*, ‘to flow, to swim, to walk’ derives, which is still existent in New High German *rennen* and *rinnen*; cp. *The Oxford Dictionary*, ed. John A. Simpson, vol. 13 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), and the entry “rinnan” in the *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Germanic*, ed. Guus Kroonen (Leiden: Brill, 2009), https://dictionaries.brillonline.com/search#dictionary=proto_germanic&id=pg1887 (last accessed on Jan. 4, 2019). Furthermore, there is an etymological hypothesis according to which these words all stem from the reconstructed Proto-Indo-European root **er-3* : *or-* : *r-*, ‘to move,’ see Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 1 (Bern: A. Franke, 1959), 326–32.

Application of randomness and randomization certainly are as old as humanity, and there is much proof of its use in divination and decision-making.¹⁴ Modern probability theory, however, did not emerge before 1654, the year of the correspondence between Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) and Pierre de Fermat (1607–1665) dealing with how fairly to divide a prize pot among two gamblers after their game has been interrupted before one of them has achieved a clear victory.¹⁵ Against the backdrop of mathematic knowledge on probability, it becomes apparent that humans lack any cognitive capacities for a direct understanding of randomness. In fact, more often than not, randomness is a mere figment of our perceptions. To make this point, Paul Watzlawick (1921–2007) used the very example of shuffling a pack of cards:

“Nature abhors a vacuum,” Spinoza quoted Cicero, and those of us who are not philosophers of science generally find it plausible that nature should somehow want to keep things tidy. But if we shuffled a deck of cards and then found that they had arranged themselves neatly into the four suits, each running from ace all the way up to king, we would consider this a little too tidy to be believable. When a statistician tells us that this outcome is exactly as probable as any other outcome, we do not quite understand him, until it finally dawns on us that, indeed, *any* order produced by shuffling is as probable or as improbable as the one just mentioned. This one seems unusual for reasons that have nothing to do with probability but rather with our idea of order; we have assigned exclusive meaning, importance and prominence to this one outcome and have bunched all the others together as having no order – or being *random*, as the technical term goes.¹⁶

As a perceptual phenomenon, randomness hence has only little to do with probability or predictability. More often than not, it is an effect of notions of what we consider order or disorder. Something random seems to lack any pattern, which might be an illusion only, as for a given random series of items “the most we can say is that it has no pattern that anyone is likely to look for. The concept of randomness bears meaning only in relation to the observer; if two observers habitually look for different kinds of pattern they are bound to disagree upon the series which they call random.”¹⁷

14 Sérgio B. Volchan, “What Is a Random Sequence?,” *The Mathematical Association of America Monthly* 109 (Jan 2002): 47–63; here 47.

15 *Die Entwicklung der Wahrscheinlichkeitstheorie von den Anfängen bis 1933: Einführungen und Texte*, ed. Ivo Schneider (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), 25–40.

16 Paul Watzlawick, “Randomness and Rules,” id., *How Real is Real? Confusion–Disinformation–Communication* (1977; London: Souvenir Press, 1983), 55–60; here 55–6.

17 G. Spencer Brown, *Probability and Scientific Interference* (New York: Longmans and Green, 1957), 105.

As a special method of randomization, shuffling is a mechanical practice and deals with the manipulation of physical objects. This connection to the materiality of objects is why it makes for a valuable research subject in the area of what today is known as the “Material Turn” within the Humanities that calls for more research focusing on the cultural role of materiality and material objects.¹⁸ Consequently, game scholar Miguel Sicart has recently plead for more research on “playthings,” as he calls material gaming devices, in order to develop an “ecological theory of expressive and creative play.”¹⁹ For him, playthings represent the genuine “matter of play,”²⁰ in both senses of the word: they stand at the center of ludic experience, and they are their material foundation: “The materiality of toys is important to understand how the object is experienced and what type of relations they establish with the context of play. Materiality is an important element for understanding affection and emotion.”²¹ What we call the gaming experience thus involves networks of human and non-human actors – in this case, of paper objects we call playing cards.²² Games are complex compositions of rules, objects, and players, and often involve further practices that could be called ‘meta-ludic,’ such as negotiations between players regarding who should shuffle and deal the cards.

Against this backdrop, it is the goal of the following pages to develop a first approach to a cultural history of shuffling in the late Middle Ages and early modern times, with a focus on how the appearance of card games in the fourteenth century gradually infiltrated and changed conceptions of randomness and how to deal with chance.²³ In the spirit of the aforementioned Material Turn, a related question is how authors from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth centuries, when modern probability theory emerged, reflected the relational triangle between the materiality of card games, randomization practices, and the perception of chance. The central issue of materiality is why for this topic it is crucial to

18 *Dingkulturen. Objekte in Literatur, Kunst und Gesellschaft der Vormoderne*, ed. Anna Mühlherr, Heike Sahm, Monika Schausten, and Bruno Quast. Beiträge zu einer kulturwissenschaftlichen Mediävistik, 9 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016).

19 Miguel Sicart, *Play Matters*. Playful Thinking (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 2014), 35.

20 Sicart, *Play Matters* (see note 19), 35–48.

21 Sicart, *Play Matters* (see note 19), 46.

22 Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

23 See the contribution to this volume by Maria Raid, who examines late fifteenth-century German card games from an art-historical perspective and thereby sheds light on this aspect of courtly entertainment.

take into account artefacts, as the analysis of preserved examples of early cards can supplement what we can gather about these games and randomization techniques from textual sources alone.²⁴ For a better understanding of the change that came with the introduction of playing cards it is furthermore instructive to take a glance at much older randomization techniques. In this regard, one finding is that some ancient practices already entail randomization techniques that show similarities with the much later card-shuffling. A brief discussion of relevant passages of the *Libro de acedrex dados e tablas* (*Book of Games*), by King Alfonso X of Castile and León (r. 1252–1284), will furthermore outline an element already prevalent in antiquity – the moral implications of randomization. In this context, Alfonso’s book contains insightful deliberations on how the material design of gaming objects was intended to guarantee perfect randomness as precondition for a balanced and fair game.

Sibylline Leaves: Randomness and Randomization

Before early modern scholars gained an understanding that there is actually a mathematical pattern in the probability of casting dice, its outcome seemed to be rather mystical instead. Dice certainly account for the best-known examples of random generators. A widespread myth in ancient Greece and Rome, as reported, for example, variously by Herodotus (ca. 484–ca. 425 B.C.), Pausanias (ca. 110–ca. 180 A.D.), and Plato (428/427 or 424/423–348/347 B.C.), was that dice games had been invented either by the Lydians,²⁵ by Palemedes during

24 For instance, in his legal treatise Stephanus Costa talks of “*Ludus azari & chartarum*” as a proper genre next to games of skill (*in ingenio*) and games of pure chance (*in fortuna*), as well as mixed forms. However, he does not say anything more about how card games differ from *ludi azari*, not even how the latter can be distinguished from *ludi in fortuna*. It is furthermore interesting to note that he uses a term derived from Arabic, *az-zahr*, dice, which also is the root of the English word *hazard*, Stephanus Costa, *Tractatus de ludo lectus pro clarissimum iuris* (...) (Pavia: Franciscus de Sancto Pedro, 1478).

25 “In the reign of Atys son of Manes there was great scarcity of food in all Lydia. For a while, the Lydians bore this with what patience they could; presently, when the famine did not abate, they looked for remedies, and different plans were devised by different men. Then it was that they invented the games of dice and knuckle-bones and ball and all other forms of game except dice, which the Lydians do not claim to have discovered,” Herodotus, *Histories*, ed. and trans. A. D. Godley (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920), 1.94.3.

the Trojan War,²⁶ or by the Egyptian God Thōth.²⁷ In his *Etymologies*, Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636) later referred to such myths when he writes that games (*lūdi*) were called thus because of a homophony with Lydians (*Lydi*). However, he thereafter mentions another origin story by Marcus Terentius Varro (116–27 B.C.), according to whom the word *lūdus* derived from *lūsus*, another word for ‘game,’²⁸ because young men used to entertain the people with performative spectacles during festivities.²⁹

Astragals, the knucklebones of sheep or goats,³⁰ or cubic dice (κύβοι/*tesserae*) similar to those still in use today, were both commonly used in ancient Rome and Greece, with the latter being usually made from ivory, clay, bronze, but sometimes also other materials, and the numerical values denoted through dots, lines or words. Like today, two opposite sides of a die would usually add up to the number seven.³¹ On the other hand, the ancient Egyptian *Senet*, of

26 Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, ed. and trans. by W.H.S. Jones and H.A. Ormerod, 4 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press and London: William Heinemann, 1918), vol. 1, 2.20.3: “Over against the Nemean Zeus is a temple of Fortune, which must be very old if it be the one in which Palamedes dedicated the dice that he had invented.” A number of inventions was attributed to Palamedes, including the alphabet, numbers, weights and measures, coinage, board games, and the practice of eating at regular intervals.

27 Plato, *Phaedrus*, id., Plato in Twelve Volumes, ed. and trans. by Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press and London: William Heinemann, 1925), 274c–d: “I heard, then, at Naucratis, in Egypt, was one of the ancient gods of that country, the one whose sacred bird is called the ibis, and the name of the god himself was Theuth. He it was who invented numbers and arithmetic and geometry and astronomy, also draughts and dice, an, most important of all, letters.”

28 *Lūsus* derived from the identical past participle of *lūdēre*, and usually synonymous with *lūdus*. However, especially classical authors would also employ *lūsus* to distinguish subjective play from objective play (*lūdus*). Moreover, *lūdus* was associated with recreation, *lūsus* with aimless activities; cf. Ludwig von Doederlein, *Lateinische Synonyme und Etymologien* (Leipzig: Friedrich Christian Wilhelm Vogel, 1826), vol. 2, 28, 29.

29 Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and trans. Stephen A. Barney, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, XVIII: *De bello et ludis*, 16.2. The historical background of Isidore’s last etymology might be that in ancient Rome, religious festivals and public games were called *ludi*, which were often accompanied by various forms of entertainment, including theatrical performances. Tertullian related to the Lydians as creators of games too, see Tertullian, *De spectaculis. Über die Spiele*. Latin and German (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2008), 21.

30 The four sides of these knucklebones represented the numbers one, six, three, and four respectively. Similar to cubic dice, the numbers were arranged so that opposite sides amounted to seven.

31 Rolf Hirschmann, “Würfelspiele,” *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. 12.2 (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2002), 578. Marco Fittà, *Spiele und Spielzeug in der Antike*, trans. Claudia Homann (1997; Stuttgart: Theiss, 1998), 110–22. Cf. David Parlett, *The Oxford History of Board Games* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 25–29.

which the oldest known specimens were created around 3100 B.C., applied “four binary lots, consisting of split twigs called fingers, with one side plain and one decorated,” which determined “the length of move as one per plain face uppermost, or five if none so fall.”³² The *Royal Game of Ur*, created in ancient Mesopotamia around 2600–2400 B.C., used tetrahedrons, “each with its four corners snipped off and with two of the resultant exposed surfaces marked by a treatment of inlay,” so that they would yield four possible outcomes, from zero to three.³³

Many games in ancient Greece and Rome required three to four dice, cast from the palm or back of the hand. Dice cups (φύλλος/*fritillus*) were known as well, to guarantee a greater randomness of the outcome, which already proves that this had been regarded as a problem that could be solved by a material device.³⁴ Such dice cups were usually made from transient materials, but archaeologists have also found some made from bronze or clay.³⁵ A refined alternative occurred in small towers (*turricula* or *pyrgus*) of ivory, wood or copper, with a little staircase over which dice could roll downstairs (Fig. 1).³⁶

Another randomization practice, often with real-life consequences, was the casting of lots (κλήρος/*sors*), which Strobl also mentions in the passage quoted above. Lots were used to investigate the will of the Gods, but also for finding advice in decision-making (*sors consultatoria*) and for prophecies (*sors divinatoria*) in face of everyday problems and difficult life situations.³⁷ There were different

32 David Parlett, *The History of Board Games* (see note 31), 66–68. Cf. Walter Crist, Anne-Elizabeth Dunn–Vaturi, and Alex de Voogt, *Ancient Egyptians at Play: Board Games Across Borders* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 41–80.

33 Parlett, *The History of Board Games* (see note 31), 63–66. Irving Finkel, “On the Rules for the Royal Game of Ur,” *Ancient Board Games in Perspective: Papers from the 1990 British Museum Colloquium*, ed. Irving Finkel (London: British Museum Press, 2007), 16–32.

34 Martialis, *Epigrammata*, ed. Wilhelm Heraeus and Jacobus Borovskij. Bibliotheca scriptorium Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (1925; Leipzig: Teuber, 1976), 4.14 and 13.1.

35 Heinz Günter Horn, “Si per me misit, nil nisi vota feret. Ein römischer Spielturm aus Froitzheim,” *Bonner Jahrbücher des Rheinischen Museums in Bonn und des Vereins von Altertumsfreunden im Rheinlande* 189 (1989): 139–59.

36 Isidore, *The Etymologies* (see note 29), XVIII, 60, mentions the use of *pyrgi* for a game called *tabula* or *alea*, and even dedicates whole subchapter to them (61), wherein he presents the obscure etymology that the word *pyrgus* derived from *pergere*, after which he then adds—correctly—that the name merely comes from the Greek πύργος, ‘tower,’ as they indeed look like towers. He does not mention explicitly that *pyrgi* were used for randomization purposes, but that the “dice moved through them,” which might be the reason why they are called *pyrgi*, from *pergere* (to walk through). Perhaps he relied on other sources and did not know the objects first-hand.

37 Peter J. Rhodes, Walter Ameling, Wilhelm Kiersdorf, Johannes Nollé, et al., “Los,” *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. 7 (Stuttgart und Weimar: Metzler, 1999), 443–47; esp. 446–47.



Fig. 1: The so-called Vettweiss–Froitzheim Dice Tower, fourth century C.E., found in Germany in 1985, Rheinisches Landesmuseum Bonn

allotment methods (κλήρωσις/*sortitio*) for different purposes. The Old Testament makes mention of lots, and they also appear in the New Testament, for instance at a very prominent position when soldiers cast them to decide who should receive Jesus's clothes.³⁸ In ancient Greece and Rome, allotment could serve political and religious purposes as well. In Athens of the fourth century B.C., almost all public offices were assigned through lots, with the exception of military offices, which were chosen by elections. For many such offices, including court juries, a very refined system was used, involving casting machines (κληρωτήριον).³⁹

³⁸ John 19:23–24.

³⁹ J. David Bishop, "The Cleroterium," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 90 (1970): 1–14; Sterling Dow, "Aristotle, the Kleroteria and the Courts," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 50 (1939): 1–34;

The *kleroterion* consisted of a stone slab incised with rows of slots, and an attached tube containing dice of several colors. Each slot was filled with a token for every candidate. The dice were then released one by one, each corresponding to one of the rows of tokens. The color determined whether the respective candidate was selected for a seat in the city council (βουλή) or the jury. That church officials are known as κλήρος or *clerus* since Tertullian (ca. 155–ca. 240 C.E.) goes back to the election of the successor of the Apostle Matthew by lots, even though the Church later on refused to choose clergy through allotment.⁴⁰

Bibliomancy, another widespread technique applying randomization, already existed in antiquity and was later applied to the Bible. Criticized and forbidden if used for profane issues, it was sanctioned for searching the divine will.⁴¹ In his *Confessions*, Augustine (354–430) admits having practiced bibliomancy himself. After hearing the voice of a child singing “tolle, lege, tolle, lege,” he decided to consult a codex with the words of Paul, and randomly yielded Romans 13:13, which convinced him to convert.⁴² Similarly, the author of the *Life of Saint Francis by the Three Companions* (ca. 1245) writes that on April 16, 1208, Saint Francis had gone to the church of San Nicolò de Assisi at the Piazza del Comune, accompanied by his new brethren Bernhard of Quintavall and Petrus Catanii. Questioning his path, he randomly opened a *missale* three times, yielding Matthew 19:21, Luke 9:3, and Luke 9:23.⁴³

James Wycliffe Headlam, *Election by Lot at Athens* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1933). P. Demont, “Le klērôtērion, ‘machine à tirer au sort’ et la démocratie athénienne,” *Bulletin de l’Association Guillaume Budé* (2003): 26–52.

40 App 1:15–26; cf. 1 Petr. 5:3.

41 This is regulated by Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. and trans. by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Laurence Shapcote and Daniel Joseph Sullivan, 2 vols. *Great Books of the Western World*, 19 and 20 (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), II–II, q. 95, art. 8, wherein he condemns sortilege for purposes other than the search of the divine.

42 Helmut Feld, *Franziskus von Assisi und seine Bewegung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), 147.

43 Emma Guernsey Salter, *The Legend of Saint Francis by the Three Companions* (London: J. M. Dent, 1902), 29, 51–52; Helmut Feld, *Franziskus von Assisi und seine Bewegung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), 143–5. Helmut Feld, *Franziskus von Assisi* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2001), 28. According to Matthew 19:21, King James Version (KJV), *The Holy Bible. An Exact Reprint Page for Page of The Authorized Version Published in the Year MDCXI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1833): “Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poore, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.” According to Luke 9:3 (KJV): “And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apeece.” Luke 9:23 (KJV): “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him denie himselfe, and take up his crosse daily, and follow me.”

Ancient sources mention a randomization technique practiced by the Sibyls (Σίβυλλα, Lat. Sibylla) that resembles the practice of shuffling even more.⁴⁴ Regarding the Cumaean Sibyl, Jorge Guillermo writes:

From all accounts it has been established that the sibyl routinely used dry foliage collected by her attendants as what is normally called “scrap paper” in the modern world. ... Whenever she was seized by prophetic visions, her usual practice was to use these leaves to write down each utterance as her revelations gradually unfolded. Eventually her prophecies would have been individually recorded one by one on separate leaves. As soon as her visions had come to an end her attendants would quickly assemble all the leaves in tidy heaps which the sibyl herself would then arrange in strict sequential order. The leaves would remain undisturbed on the ground along the walls of her cave, but only until the door was opened and the unrelenting wind rushed in. At that moment they would scatter everywhere, but to everyone’s dismay the Cumaean Sibyl would not attempt to catch any of them as they swirled around the cave. ... The image of the sibyl’s words flying aimlessly in the wind and alighting on the ground at random presents a most evocative account of her prophetic methods. It is well known from a great many reliable sources that her pronouncements did actually fly around like leaves in the wind throughout every corner of the classical world. It is also well known that the precise meaning of these prophecies was not always immediately apparent to those who first received them.⁴⁵

It is easy to imagine the mantic leaves replaced with paper or playing cards. Their randomization methods share some material similarities, although one main difference certainly is that shuffling is executed manually, whilst the Sibylline technique operates in a fully contactless, disembodied manner. Similar to the *pyrgi*, it involves giving up control by delegating it to a natural force, thereby transforming it into a non-human agent – in this case, the wind, along with gravitation for the *pyrgi*. The less control a human actor has on the operation of a random generator, the more random the results. To reduce the direct contact between the random generator and the operator’s body therefore is paramount for yielding the best outcome. Even today, a similar principle is applied for generating high quality random numbers with computers that exploits sources of natural entropy, such as atmospheric noise, thermal noise, or even radioactive decay.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Christine Walde, “Sibylle,” *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. 11 (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2001), 499–501.

⁴⁵ Jorge Guillermo, *Sibyls: Prophecy and Power in the Ancient World* (London: Duckworth Overlook, 2013), particularly Chapter 3 “The Erythraean Sibyl” and Chapter 4, “The Cumaean Sibyl”; I am much obliged to Fidel Fajardo-Acosta (Creighton University), who is also represented in this volume, for having pointed out this reference to me.

⁴⁶ Katrin Becker and Jim Parker, *The Guide to Computer Simulations and Games* (Indianaapolis, IN: John Wiley, 2012), 119–44, make mention of random.org, a web page that provides a random audio noise generator; <http://www.random.org> (last accessed on Oct. 25, 2018). For more artful

All three examples – the *kleroterion*, the *pyrgus*, and the mantic leaves – demonstrate that already in antiquity there was an – albeit in many cases merely implicit – understanding that randomness is increased if human control is reduced. Human intentionality imposes a *direction* on things, a directedness toward the future,⁴⁷ whereas what is required for randomness is the complete opposite, *non-directedness* and an elimination of all intentions, which, interestingly, the etymology of ‘random’ already suggests: an uncontrollable, roving motion, that goes nowhere and everywhere at the same time. That is one reason why according to iconographic traditions Fortuna was often depicted as an emotionless, impartial, sometimes even blind,⁴⁸ agent of Providence – an impartiality that made her even seem cruel at times.

Randomization and Dice in the *Libro de acedrex dados e tablas* by Alfonso X

In respect to how crucial impartiality is for randomness, it is astonishing that Isidore of Seville seems to miss this point completely. In paragraph 66 of the book on war and games (*De bello et ludis*) in his *Etymologiae*, he suggests that experienced players of a game called *Alea* were capable of casting dice in a way that allowed them to yield desired results.⁴⁹ It hence seems likely that he had written down his account from the standpoint of an ‘armchair anthropologist,’ who had never actually observed the game first-hand but used other sources. Accordingly, the text reproduces the perspective of someone who has, or at least pretends to have, no experience of casting dice him- or herself, for it is exactly the opposite, the lack of control, that makes the ludic endeavor of casting dice exciting. If at

approaches to computer-generated randomness, see Ethan Ham, “Randomness, Chance & Art,” *Handbook of Research on Computational Arts and Creative Informatics*, ed. James Braman, Giovanni Vincenti, and Goran Trajkovski (Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference, 2009), 85–102, who not only mention random.org again, but also the use of popping popcorn for generating randomness with computers.

⁴⁷ This idea of intentionality characterized by directedness follows Edmund Husserl’s model, which has been met with controversy. As for the current debate on the link between intentionality and action, see *Intentionality and Action*, ed. Jesús Padilla Gálvez and Margit Gaffal. Aporia, 10 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017). However, the concept of directedness in intentionality is still helpful for understanding how much randomness opposes human will, regardless the philosophical details.

⁴⁸ On Fortune’s blindness see note 3.

⁴⁹ Isidore, *The Etymologies* (see note 29), XVIII, 66.

all, experienced players only knew better how to make use of a given cast strategically, and perhaps Isidore could have observed such cases directly in some games.

What we find in Alfonso X's (r. 1252–1284) *Libro de acedrex dados e tablas* (preserved solely in Escorial, MS j.T.6), completed around 1283 or 1284, appears quite different. Given its date of completion, this richly illustrated manuscript does not consider card games, of course, since they did not arrive in Europe before the fourteenth century.⁵⁰ Conceived of as a kind of encyclopedic *summa ludorum*, the book instead includes chess problems, dice, and other board games, some of which might have been composed for the book.⁵¹ Besides giving instructions on how games were played, the texts also describe the proper manufacture of game pieces and boards, which stresses that one central objective of the 150 (originally 152) miniatures was to conserve and transmit visual aspects of gaming devices.⁵² For example, the miniature on fol. 3r of the *Libro de acedrex* depicts the creation of chess pieces and the tools used, including a lathe, whereas fol. 65v shows the manufacture of dice from bone scraps, including the drilling of pimps and the sale of finished product. A fascination for the rather profane matter of manufacture was not uncommon for this king, whose work shows a general interest for the mechanical arts, attestable for instance in a compilation of books on the construction of astronomical instruments, the *Libros del saber de astronomía*.⁵³

50 More on transcultural aspects of early playing cards further below.

51 This might especially be true for the two astrological games at the end of the manuscript (fols. 95r–97v). See the excellent German translation with many helpful comments by Ulrich Schädler and Ricardo Calvo, Alfonso X, *Das Buch der Spiele*, trans. and commented by Ulrich Schädler and Ricardo Calvo. Ludographie, 1 (Vienna and Münster: LIT, 2009). Since the reign of Felipe II of Spain (r. 1555/56–1598), the original manuscript has been kept at the library of the Escorial (Escorial, MS j.T.6). An edition of the original, together with Alfonso's legal work on gambling houses is Alfonso X el Sabio, *Libro de los juegos: acedrex, dados e tablas. Ordenamiento de las tafurerías* (Madrid: Biblioteca Castro and Fundación José Antonio de Castro, 2007). The most comprehensive study of this work so far is Sonja Musser Golladay, "Los libros de acedrex dados e tablas: Historical, Artistic and Metaphysical Dimensions of Alfonso X's *Book of Games*," Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 2007. Unfortunately, Musser Golladay's treatise with more than 1,400 pages has not been published yet, and is only available in a digital version. As part of her thesis, Musser Golladay also translated Alfonso's manuscript into English; henceforth, this translation will be referenced as Musser Golladay, *Book of Games*. For other aspects on this most important source on medieval game culture, see also the contribution by Fidel Fajardo-Acosta in this volume.

52 Cf. Alfonso X, *Das Buch der Spiele* (see note 51), 33–44.

53 Alfonso X, *Libros del saber de astronomía*, ed. Manuel Rico y Sinobas (1863–1867; Valladolid: Maxtor, 2011). Laura Fernández Fernández, *Arte y Ciencia en el scriptorium de Alfonso el Sabio*.

As part of his interest in modes of manufacture, in the *Libro de acedrex* Alfonso also deliberates upon what physical qualities a perfect dice requires:

E dezimos que an de seer tres figuras cuadradas de seis cantos eguales, tamaño ell uno como ell otro en grandez e en igualdad de la cuadra, ca si en otra manera fuesse no caeríe tan bien d'una parte como d'otra, e serié engaño más que ventura. E por ende, ésta es la una de las maneras de engaño, como diremos adelante, con que fazen los dados engañosos aquellos que quieren engañar con ellos.

[And We say that dice should consist of three squared shapes of six equal sides, all equal in size and perfectly square because otherwise they will not roll as often on one side as another and it would be trickery more than luck (*ventura*). And thus this is the first of the ways of cheating, as We will tell later, in which those who wish to cheat make crooked dice.]⁵⁴

The passage is remarkable not only for its indication that Alfonso knew about concrete practices of game-cheating but also that he had an understanding of the connection between the material designs of dice and their property to produce randomization. He stresses the importance of equal-sized die-sides for preventing any inclination of a certain number, thus yielding unbiased impartiality. Without the knowledge of modern stochastics, there nonetheless was an implicit understanding that such 'blind' impartiality is a precondition of ideal dice, as it provides each number with the same probability. The material design of equal shapes and sizes thus guarantees equal probability – a reason why Platonic solids have been preferred die-designs until this very day.⁵⁵ Alfonso's text therefore is a strikingly early example for how a material standardization affects morals and is driven by moral issues, as it not only prevents players from cheating

Monografías de Alfonso X, 1. Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, Serie historia y geografía (Sevilla and El Puerto de Santa María: Universidad de Sevilla and Cátedra Alfonso X el Sabio, 2013), who states that the compilation as we know it today was actually completed in three steps: 1256–1259, 1260–1268, and 1278 (esp. 216–19). Hugh of Saint Victor (ca. 1096–1141) defined play as a mechanical discipline that he called *theatrica* and assigned to a separate category of art within a system of altogether seven mechanical arts (*artes mechanicae*); see Michael A. Conrad, "Spiel-Handwerk. Die *theatrica* des Hugo von St. Viktor als Epistemologisierung ludischer Handlungen im 12. Jahrhundert," *Episteme des Theaters: Aktuelle Kontexte von Wissenschaft, Kunst und Öffentlichkeit*, ed. Milena Cairo, Moritz Hannemann, Ulrike Haß, and Judith Schäfer. Theater, 90 (Bielefeld: transcript, 2016), 311–20.

⁵⁴ Musser Golladay, "Book of Games" (see note 51), n.p. [14]; in the original manuscript, fol. 65r.

⁵⁵ The tetrahedons of the *Royal Game of Ur* mentioned above would be an example for the use of a Platonic solid other than a cube, which seemingly proves that the connection between equal proportions and equal probabilities might have even been known way back then, i.e., in the third millennium B.C.

but also, in turn, to help identify those that do, as crooked dice yield certain numbers more often than they should if compared against this standard.⁵⁶

Yet Alfonso did not stop here. He also acknowledged differences in relation to material properties. In a later passage of the book he added, “E estos dados pueden seer fechos de fuste o de piedra o de huesso o de todo metal, mas señaladamiente son mejores de huesso, el más pesado que fallaren, que d’otra cosa ninguna, e más igualmiente e más llanos caen doquier que los echen. (And these dice can be made of wood, or of stone, or of bone, or of any metal, but the best ones are those made of bone, the heaviest to be found, more than any other material and they fall more equally and more squarely on any type of surface.)”⁵⁷ From archeological excavations, it is known that, apart from those named materials, dice were also made from fired clay, horn, rock crystal, and amber, whereas ivory, silver, and gold were usually reserved for the nobility.⁵⁸ According to Alfonso, weight thus mattered too. But what connection did Alfonso exactly draw between the weight of dice and the impact it had on their cast? How did he understand the influence of the materiality of dice on their fall, so that they, in best case, would “fall more equally and more squarely”? It certainly comes without saying that materials for dice should not be too light, so that a small breeze would not blow them away, which would presumably rule out paper, the material from which playing cards are usually made. It is also clear that dice should not roll too long, but stop rather quickly after they hit the surface. Again, Alfonso makes it clear that equality should be considered the most important property for yielding randomness, in this case referring to the

56 Ulrich Schädler, “Organizing the Greed for Gain: Alfonso X of Spain’s Law on Gambling Houses,” *Religions in Play. Games, Rituals, and Virtual Worlds*, ed. Philippe Bornet and Maya Burger. CULTuREL: Religionswissenschaftliche Forschungen, 2 (Zurich: Pano, 2012), 23–48. In his examination of the laws for gambling houses proposed by Alfonso, the *Ordenamiento de las tafureñas* (ca. 1276/1277), Schädler shows that these could have worked in practice only if Alfonso understood the probability distribution in dice games at least intuitively (esp. 43): “It is assumed here that the mathematical precision of the random generator would guarantee pure chance leaving no room for cheating, in order to make a rational approach to dice games possible by calculating the probability of chances. With only one well-defined type of die being authorized by the *Ordenamiento*, undisputable results were meant to be guaranteed since the chances could be clearly established mathematically” (45).

57 Alfonso X el Sabio, *Libro de los juegos* (see note 51), 255–56; the English translation follows Musser Golladay, “Book of Games” (see note 51), n.p. [15], but with a slight correction; in the original manuscript, fol. 65r/v.

58 Walter Tauber, *Das Würfelspiel im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit: Eine kultur- und sprachgeschichtliche Darstellung*. Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe 1, Deutsche Sprache und Literatur, 959 (Frankfurt a. M., Bern, and New York: Peter Lang, 1987), 17. For example, the inventory of Duke Sibotos of Falkenstein (ca. 1170) mentions dice made from ivory.

form of motion in free fall. As he was a devoted follower of Aristotle, it is safe to assume that Alfonso had taken his ideas from that classical author's natural philosophy, which had reasoned that the speed at which an object falls is directly proportional to its weight, with the implication that heavier solids would fall faster.⁵⁹ In both quoted passages, Alfonso accordingly assigns agency to gaming objects in terms of "scripts" that dice-makers inscribe into the dice-designs in order to guarantee their operation in a morally sanctioned manner.⁶⁰

So much for the object. But what about the players? What connection did Alfonso see between the physical activity of casting dice and their outcome? How could the materiality of the die prevent players from having an advantage, for example, by applying a certain casting technique, as Isidore assumed? Alfonso's descriptions seem to allude to a contemporary shift in the understanding not only of chance and randomization but also of the physics of projectile motion. Still quite similar to Isidore, in *The Book of Healing*, Physics IV.14, Avicenna (Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusain bin 'Abd Allāh ibn Sīnā, ca. 980–1037) wrote that "[w]hen we independently verify the issue (of projectile motion), we find the most correct doctrine is the doctrine of those who think that the moved object acquires an inclination from the mover."⁶¹ The Arab natural philosopher Abū'l-Barakāt Hibāt Allah ibn Malkā al-Baghdādī (ca. 1080–1164/65) took up Avicenna's ideas, but additionally assigned a resistant force. He claimed that even though the mover imparts a violent inclination onto the object, this very inclination would diminish the more distance a moving object has in relation to its mover.⁶² This observation in turn inspired Jean (or Johannes) Buridan (ca. 1300–ca. 1358/61) and Albert of Saxony (ca. 1320–1390), according to whom the acceleration of falling

⁵⁹ James McAllister, "Das virtuelle Labor: Gedankenexperimente in der Mechanik des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts," *Kunstkammer–Laboratorium–Bühne: Schauplätze des Wissens im 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. Helmar Schramm and Ludger Schwarte. *Theatrum Scientiarum*, 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 35–55; here 51.

⁶⁰ Bruno Latour, "Where are the Missing Masses? The Sociology of a Few Mundane Artifacts," *Shaping Technology/Building Society: Studies in Sociotechnical Change*, ed. Wiebke E. Bijker and John Law (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 151–80. Madeleine Akrich, "The De-Scriptio of Technological Objects," *Shaping Technology/Building Society*, 205–24. Hartmut Böhme, *Fetischismus und Kultur: Eine andere Theorie der Moderne* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2012), 83. I am very grateful to Prof. Dr. Anne Eusterschulte (Freie Universität Berlin) for pointing out to me the possible relevance of impetus theory for medieval ideas of how dice fall.

⁶¹ Jon McGinnis and David C. Reisman, *Classical Arabic Philosophy. An Anthology of Sources* (Indianapolis, IN, and Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing, 2007), 174.

⁶² Oliver Gutman, *Pseudo-Avicenna, Liber Celi Et Mundi: A Critical Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 193.

bodies is caused by the increase of its impetus, with impetus being the product of the object's weight and its velocity.⁶³

Did Alfonso share a similar idea? It is usually assumed that the theory of impetus, the roots of which go back to John Philoponus (ca. 490 – ca. 570), was not received in the West before Jean Buridan.⁶⁴ However, given the special historic situation of Castile as a contact zone between the Islamic and Christian Worlds and that Alfonso had a strong interest in Islamic knowledge, it is possible that he had known al-Baghdādī's or similar theories.⁶⁵ Such an assumption would make it easier to understand what connection Alfonso saw between the materiality of dice and the quality of their fall. In his view, the material determines the weight of dice, and their weight determines the form of their fall, with heavier materials causing a more stable and equalized motion – which is desirable, as it allows for a more equal distribution of probability. Moreover, Alfonso also acknowledges that there is a common agency shared by both the player and cast object.

John of Rheinfelden on Randomness in Card Games

Casting lots and turning cards are processes of recognition, of turning darkness into light, and thus resemble self-recognition in the presence of God and, consequently, the acceptance of one's role, as laid out by divine providence. The word

63 Christoph Kann, "Zeichen–Ordnung–Gesetz: Zum Naturverständnis in der mittelalterlichen Philosophie," *Natur im Mittelalter. Konzeptionen–Erfahrungen–Wirkungen*, Akten des 9. Symposiums des Mediävistenverbandes, Marburg, 14. –17. März 2001, ed. Peter Dilg. Symposium des Mediävistenverbandes, 9 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003), 33–49; here 46. Anneliese Maier, "Das Wesen des Impetus," *Zwischen Philosophie und Mechanik* (Rome: Ed. di storia e letteratura, 1958), 341–373; esp. 354–70. Michael Wolff, *Geschichte der Impetustheorie. Untersuchungen zum Ursprung der klassischen Mechanik* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1978), 218–228.

64 One reason for the late reception of Philoponus is that he was condemned as a heretic in 680–681. He had already argued that a mover imposes an inclination for movement onto an object, but that such inclination is only temporary; see Aydin Sayili, "Ibn Sinā and Buridan on the Motion of the Projectile," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 500.1 (1987): 477–82; here 477.

65 The Franciscan Franciscus de Marchia (ca. 1285–ca. 1344) developed a kinetic theory a few decades before Buridan that shares some common features with his impetus theory, yet contains some central differences; see Notker Schneider, *Die Kosmologie des Franciscus de Marchia: Texte, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Naturphilosophie des 14. Jahrhunderts*. Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 28 (Leiden, New York, Copenhagen, and Cologne: Brill, 1991), esp. 227.

‘role’ for a theatric part entertains strong ties to paper as a carrier material, as it used to refer to a small paper role (*rotula*) onto which an actor’s lines were written; even today, ‘role’ in Spanish is *el papel*, paper. In a similar vein of metonymy, the Latin name for card games – *ludus chartularum* – relates to the carrier medium paper (*charta*). The origin of the English word ‘card’ might be of Egyptian origin, as the term for the hard leaves of papyrus plants, from where it arrived at the shores of the British Isles through a chain of transformations, from Greek χάρτης to Latin *carta* and Old French *charte*, a “stiff sheet of paper.”⁶⁶ We find this very term in the title of the oldest known treatise on card games, the *Tractatus de moribus et disciplina humanae conversationis: id est ludus cartularum moralisatus* by the Dominican John (Johannes) of Rheinfelden (born ca. 1340).⁶⁷ Johannes used the game of cards as an allegory of the estates and their professions, similar to his older fellow, the Dominican Jacobus de Cessolis (fl. 1330), who in his *Liber de moribus hominum et officiis nobilium ac popularium super ludo scacchorum* had used the game of chess for the same purpose.⁶⁸ As far as I can see, however, Johannes does not mention shuffling, at least not *expressis verbis*. Instead, he lists no less than six variations of card decks, including such

66 Ulrike Wörner, *Die Dame im Spiel: Spielkarten als Indikatoren des Wandels von Geschlechterbildern und Geschlechterverhältnissen an der Schwelle zur Frühen Neuzeit*. Regensburger Schriften zur Volkskunde – Vergleichenden Kulturwissenschaft, 21 (Münster, New York, et al.: Waxmann, 2010), 42.

67 He is also known by the names of Johannes von Rheinfelden, Johannes Teuto, or Johannes von Basel, and was actually born in Freiburg; see Arne Jönsson, “Card-Playing as a Mirror of Society. On Johannes of Rheinfelden’s *Ludus cartularum moralisatus*,” *Chess and Allegory in the Middle Ages*, ed. Olle Ferm and Volker Honemann. Scripta minora / Sällskapet Runica et Mediævalia, 12 (Stockholm: Sällskapet Runica et Mediævalia, 2005), 359–72; Arne Jönsson, “Der *Ludus cartularum moralisatus* des Johannes von Rheinfelden,” *Schweizer Spielkarten*, vol. 1: *Die Anfänge im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Detlef Hoffmann and Daniel Grütter (Schaffhausen: Museum zu Allerheiligen Schaffhausen, 1998), 135–147. For many decades, Arne Jönsson (University Lund) has been working on a critical edition of John of Rheinfelden’s work. Due to the regrettable lack of such an edition until today, the quotes are taken from the manuscript in the Library of the University of Basel, MS. F IV 43, presumably the oldest copy written by a scribe named Johannes Hüller (1429). Other copies are: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Library, Vienna, MS 4143 (1472); Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, MS 225 (1472); and British Library London, MS Egerton 2419 (1472).

68 Oliver Plessow, *Mittelalterliche Schachzabelbücher zwischen Spielsymbolik und Wertevermittlung: Der Schachtraktat des Jacobus de Cessolis im Kontext seiner spätmittelalterlichen Rezeption*. Symbolische Kommunikation und gesellschaftliche Wertesysteme, 12 (Münster: Rhema, 2007). Dario Del Puppo, “The Limits of Allegory in Jacobus de Cessolis’ *De ludo scaccorum*,” *Chess in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age. A Fundamental Thought Paradigm of the Premodern World*, ed. Daniel E. O’Sullivan. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 10 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 221–40.

with fifty-two, sixty, sixty-five, and even seventy-eight cards.⁶⁹ In the text, there is at least a hint toward some kind of randomization process:

Et sic patet quod status istius mundi ut rota fortune mutantur que per ludum cartularum figuratur ... nam in ludo praedicto ymagines sunt ut nobiles alie verbo cartule ut populares seu communes. Et isti sic cognoscuntur ... quod aliqu[ae] nobiles aliqu[ae] communes victoriam obtinent et triumphum aliquin autem nobiles sint et populares. Et iste modus obtinendi victoria in ludo est quibus: Cum autem varius sit eventus belli 2. reg. xi. tamquam in rota fortune per victoriam exaltantur nunc illi nunc alij sic quod ludus s[a]lepius variatur ad motum rote fortune medium. In ludo hoc sint in quodlibet bello alio ex parte pugnarum; posset esse carta vnitas et potentia.

[And hence it is obvious that the conditions of this world change, as does the Wheel of Fortune, (here) figured by means of a card game ..., for on the cards of aforementioned game we find, nominally at least, the images of noblemen and commoners. And one thus has to recognize ... that while some noblemen and commoners may (one time) gain victories, other noblemen and commoners will (other times) triumph. And the means by which victory is obtained in this game is as follows: As success in war is something ever-changing (2 Kings 11), as in the Wheel of Fortune (*rota fortunae*), some will be elevated by their victory this moment and some at another, so that the game will change many times, with the motion of the Wheel. In this game, they (the players) are at any kind of war with someone, partially without combat; in card games there can (therefore) be concord and dominance.]⁷⁰

Similar to the rotation of the *rota fortunae*, in card games luck can turn at any given moment. Alluding to luck in war, the *fortuna bellorum*, the events of war are likened to the Wheel of Fortune and its steady, impartial motion. This connection emphasizes the agonal character of card games, as expressed in some early card decks through hunting motifs.⁷¹ Once again, the link to fortune's blindness presupposes a randomization technique of sorts, without the author going into any detail. Was there only one established technique at this early point in the European history of card games, like the simple 'washing the deck,' or were there several options available? From later literature on card tricks, we can deduce the existence of different shuffling styles.⁷² Horatio Golas-

⁶⁹ Max Geisberg, *Das Kartenspiel der kgl. Staats- und Altertümer-Sammlung in Stuttgart*, mit 49 Tafeln in Lichtdruck und einer Abbildung mit Text (Strasbourg: Heitz & Mündel, 1910), 14–16.

⁷⁰ University Basel, MS F IV 43, fol. 17r, transcription and translation by author.

⁷¹ Hunting motifs as suit symbols also appear in the *Flemish Hunting Deck*, also known as *The Cloisters Playing Cards*, created ca. 1475–1480 in the Burgundian territories, now at The Cloisters Collection, New York (inv. no. 1983.515.1–52). See also Albrecht Classen's comments on Maria Raid's contribution to this volume in the introduction with further references.

⁷² Although the famous Italian mathematician Luca Pacioli (ca. 1445–1514/17) in *De viribus quantitatis* describes card tricks, they were mostly intended to illustrate mathematical principles (University of Bologna, MS 250, 1509–1550). Cf. Tiago Wolfram Nunes dos Santos Hirth, "Luca

so, who wrote what seems to be one of the first books on card tricks, the *Giochi di Carte Belissimi* (1593), explicitly refers to shuffling (*mischiare*; in modern German: *mischen*, both rooted in Latin *miscēre*). When describing a card trick about guessing the card someone is thinking of, Galasso writes that one should shuffle the deck, but “non sfogliando alla Spagnuola,” not in “Spanish style,” that is, without pulling it apart. Instead, the upper part of the stack should be kept together (*metterte sempre di sopra tutte insieme*).⁷³

Relating card games to the *rota fortunae*, John of Rheinfelden found a conceptual means to relate the new experience of contingency of card games to a model of sublunary chance that his audience already knew well. Moreover, the exact position of contingency and chance in a world ruled by divine law and providence was part of a vivid scholarly debate affected by a new conception of nature that had emerged in the twelfth century due to the reception of texts from late antiquity, including Euclid, Ptolemy, and Galen, and of Arabic authors, such as Al-Farabi (ca. 872–950/951) or Avicenna.⁷⁴ This debate intensified in course of the rediscovery of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* and its Arab commentaries. As a result, the cosmos now appeared as split into a sublunary and a superlunary domain, with the former dominated by the steady movement of the planets and the continuous connections and divisions of the elements.⁷⁵ Nature became regarded as an autonomous realm (*natura naturata* versus *natura naturans*); more and more things in the world thus would be perceived as contingent, while the divine order slowly but increasingly weakened.⁷⁶

Pacioli and His 1500 Book *De Viribus Quantitatis*,” Ph.D. diss., Universidade de Lisboa, 2015, who mentions that an application of Pacioli’s solution to the so-called Josephus Problem discussed in chapter 56 is the *Down/Under Deal* or *Australian Shuffle* (46–48; in Pacioli’s manuscript on fols. 99r–102v).

⁷³ Horatio Galasso, *Giochi di Carte Belissimi di Regola, e di Memoria con gl’auuertimenti per tutti quelli che giocano à Primera, Cartetta, & altri giochi* (...) (Venice, 1593), 7: “Tal che finito che hauete di chiamarle tutte farete alzare, & poi mischiare, però no[n] sfogliando alla Spagnuola, ma metterete sempre di sopra tutte insieme”

⁷⁴ *Aufbruch–Wandel–Erneuerung. Beiträge zur “Renaissance” des 12. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Georg Wieland (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1995). Andreas Speer, *Die entdeckte Natur. Untersuchungen zu Begründungsversuchen einer “scientia naturalis” im 12. Jahrhundert*. Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 45 (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: Brill, 1995). Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (1927; Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1955).

⁷⁵ Christoph Kann, “Zeichen–Ordnung–Gesetz: Zum Naturverständnis in der mittelalterlichen Philosophie,” *Natur im Mittelalter. Konzeptionen* (see note 63), 33–49; here 39.

⁷⁶ Kann, “Zeichen–Ordnung–Gesetz” (see note 75), 40. Hans Blumenberg (1920–1996) called this development a gradual “decrease of order (*Ordnungsschwund*)” at the threshold between the late Middle Ages and early modernity; see Hans Blumenberg, *Die Sorge geht über den*

The fourteenth century then paved the way for even more new ideas on nature and natural philosophy, with the aforementioned Jean Buridan, Nicole Oresme (ca. 1320/25–1382) and Albert of Saxony (ca. 1320–1390) being the most important representatives of this development.⁷⁷ Now, natural events were perceived as the result of eternal and intelligible laws, quantifiable through mathematical formulas and exploitable through technological applications.⁷⁸ A part of this process was various attempts for quantifying chance, with the anonymous Latin poem *De Vetula* (ca. 1250) being one of the earliest testimonies thereof in the Latin West. Applying simple rules of mathematical combinatorics and explicitly referring to chance (*casus*), this fictitious autobiography of Ovid in hexameters gives detailed tables on the fifty-six combinations of three cast dice, including repetitions (*punctaturae*), related permutations, and the realization possibilities for all sums of pips (*cadentiae*).⁷⁹

Fluß (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1987), 57; cf. Michael Makropoulos, *Modernität und Kontingenz* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1997), 22.

77 Anneliese Maier, “Die Anfänge des physikalischen Denkens im 14. Jahrhundert,” *Philosophia Naturalis* 1 (1950): 7–35. Nicole Oresme is also important for the development of methods for the quantification of probability (*verisimile*); see his *De Proportionibus Proportionum*; cf. James Franklin, *The Science of Conjecture: Evidence and Probability Before Pascal* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 141; Robert Ineichen, “‘Es ist wie bei den Spielen’–Nicole Oresme und sein Beitrag in der Vorgeschichte der Stochastik,” *NTM–Internationale Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Ethik der Naturwissenschaften, Technik und Medizin* 9 (2001): 137–51.

78 Kann, “Zeichen–Ordnung–Gesetz” (see note 75), 46, who, in addition to recognizing the importance of the Buridan school, also refers to the crucial role of the *Calculatores* in Oxford, e.g., Richard Kilvington, who identified mathematics as the language of natural philosophy, see Richard Kilvington, *The Sophismata*, ed. and trans. Norman Kretzmann and B. Ensign Kretzmann. *Auctores Britannici medii aevi*, 12 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

79 *De Vetula* is divided into three books: The first one describes Ovid’s youth, including love affairs and some of his amusements and pastimes, the second one centers around a tragicomic love affair whose frustration makes Ovid devote himself to philosophical pursuits, the third book finally tells the – of course fictitious – story of Ovid’s conversion to Christianity. *Pseudo-Ovidius De Vetula. Untersuchungen und Text*, ed. Paul Klopsch. *Mittellateinische Studien und Texte*, 2 (Leiden and Cologne: Brill, 1967). Cf. *Die Entwicklung der Wahrscheinlichkeitstheorie von den Anfängen bis 1933. Einführungen und Texte*, ed. Ivo Schneider (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), 1–8, who believes there might be the direct influence of a “hypothetical Islamic tradition,” as the text uses Arabic *termini technici*; an indirect influence seems more likely though. On the history of the mathematical discipline of combinatorics, with roots reaching far into early ancient times, see, e.g., Robin Wilson and John J. Watkins, *Combinatorics: Ancient and Modern*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. As for the idea of combinatorics as a universal language as promoted, e.g., by Ramon Llull in his *Ars Magna*, see Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, *Topica Universalis. Eine Modellgeschichte humanistischer und barocker Wissenschaft*. *Paradeigmata* 1 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1983), 155–211; Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, “Rai-

Ex Oriente Chartae: On the Transculturality of Early Card Games

The first scientific theories on quantifying probability in card games would, however, emerge much later. One simple reason is that card games were a much later cultural phenomenon. According to our present knowledge, playing cards originated in twelfth-century China, where two technological prerequisites were invented as well – paper and woodcut. In China, paper had quickly become a universally used commodity; by the sixth century, even paper kites were known.⁸⁰ While it is unclear if Europeans appropriated the printing technique of woodcut or invented it independently, it is certain that paper and playing cards both arrived in Europe through the Islamic World.⁸¹ The production of paper in Europe begins in al-Andalus, where paper had been known since the middle of the tenth century, where it was “mass-produced in large water-powered mills. The scale of production was a response to the burgeoning of Islamic scholarship with which the diffusion of this technique coincided.”⁸² In the Islamic World, paper was first introduced in the early eighth century, during the era of the Abbasid Dynasty, whose agents are said to have brought Chinese papermakers to Bagdad.⁸³ The earliest known paper document in Europe is a deed from Sicily, dated 1109. Roger II of Sicily (r. 1130–1154) already decreed in 1145 that all governmental paper documents had to be copied on parchment. In the *Siete Partidas*, Alfonso

mundus Lullus: die Welt als Ideen-Kombinatorik,” *Atlas der Weltbilder*, ed. Christoph Markschies, Ingeborg Reichle, Jochen Brüning and Peter Deuffhard. Forschungsberichte / Interdisziplinäre Arbeitsgruppen, Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 25 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011), 142–153.

⁸⁰ Alexander Monroe, *The Paper Trail. An Unexpected History of the World's Greatest Invention* (London and New York: Allan Lane, 2014), 1–16. Harold Innis, “The Coming of Paper,” *Harold Innis's History of Communication. Paper and Printing—Antiquity to Early Modernity*, ed. William J. Buxton, Michael R. Cheney, and Paul Heyer (Lanham, Boulder, New York, et al.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 15–56.

⁸¹ Lothar Müller, *Weisse Magie: Die Epoche des Papiers* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2012), 55.

⁸² Trevor Denning, *The Playing-Cards of Spain. A Guide for Historians and Collectors* (London and Forsgate Drive: Cygnus Arts and Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996), 17. Thomas F. Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 242.

⁸³ Harold Innis, “The Coming of Paper” (see note 80), 28; cf. Trevor Denning, *The Playing-Cards of Spain* (see note 82), 17. They do, however, mention different years: Innis claims that this took place in the 790s, whereas Denning names the period of 754–775. On the various uses and the ubiquity of paper in the Arab world, see Jonathan M. Bloom, *Paper before Print. The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2001).

X restrained the use of paper to governmental documents only.⁸⁴ In the stone-magical *Lapidario*, Alfonso furthermore recommended the use of a substance called *omna* for making paper whiter and glossier.⁸⁵

How common the sight of paper had become in the Iberian Peninsula by the thirteenth century is attested in the miniature of *cantiga* 173 of the *códice rico* of the *Cantigas de Santa María* (Escorial, MS T.1.1) that shows the display of reams of paper for sale.⁸⁶ After James I of Aragon (r. 1213–1276) had conquered Xàtiva in 1244, he encouraged the Jewish and Muslim papermakers (*al-warrāq*) of the city to continue their work.⁸⁷ Yet he “inflated and nearly ruined the industry by optioning the entire output of its mills to stoke his paper-based bureaucracy, the first in Europe.”⁸⁸ For many decades, Xàtiva remained the center of papermaking in the Iberian Peninsula, with smaller hubs being Murcia (1266), Mallorca (1280s), and probably some places in Castile.⁸⁹ The earliest examples of Catalan paper show no difference to Arab papers in texture or composition, which is why it is believed that the techniques used were identical. Early papermakers furthermore attempted to imitate parchment, with results consequently described as “rug parchment” (*pergamino de paño*) in the *Siete Partidas*. By the thirteenth century, paper was exported to Sicily from Barcelona and Valencia.⁹⁰ The old Catalan term for paper mills found in documents attests to the Islamic origin, as *almerxam papiri* derived from Arabic *mi‘šara*, ‘press.’ Thomas F. Glick holds that hydraulic mills had already been in use during Muslim times, whereas Robert I. Burns denies this, claiming that “domestic hand processing [...] prevailed.” In his view, hydraulic mills had not been introduced to Xàtiva before the 1280s.⁹¹

84 *Siete Partidas*, III, 28.5, for an English translation, see Alfonso X, *Las Siete Partidas*, ed. Robert I. Burns and Samuel Parsons Scott, 5 vols. (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

85 Thomas F. Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 242.

86 George S. Greenia, “Books and Bookmaking,” *Medieval Iberia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. E. Michael Gerli. Routledge Encyclopedias of the Middle Ages, 8 (New York: Routledge, 2003), 178–79; here 178.

87 Isabel de los Angeles O’Connor, *A Forgotten Community: the Mudejar Aljama of Xàtiva, 1240–1327*. The Medieval Mediterranean: Peoples, Economies, and Cultures, 400–1500, 44 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003).

88 George S. Greenia, “Books and Bookmaking” (see note 86), 178.

89 Robert I. Burns, “Paper,” *Medieval Iberia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. E. Michael Gerli (New York: Routledge, 2003), 631, who does not name any concrete locations of possible paper mills in Castile.

90 Thomas F. Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain* (note 80), 242.

91 Robert I. Burns, “Paper” (see note 89).

Because paper is a transient material that only survives if stored in dark and dry environments, archaeological excavations rarely retrieve paper objects. The scarcity of such artefacts may mislead one to conclude that they were rare back then. The opposite might be closer to the truth: archaeologists have found many objects made from paper and *papier mâché* in the holes, gaps, and inserted floors of medieval buildings, including examples of text genres that have never found entry into the archives before.⁹² Such findings even prove that paper had already been used in a German chancellery of the thirteenth century.⁹³ An excavation in Mühlberg unearthed several playing cards from a cardboard consisting of layers of paper sheets glued together with a paste based on cereal flour.⁹⁴

Italy and Iberia as Centers of the Earliest Card Games in Europe

But since cards were invented in China, how exactly did they enter the northern hemisphere? This is still a matter of dispute. The two likeliest hypotheses are that they entered Europe from the south through either Spain or Italy – or even both. The earliest known specimens come from both regions.⁹⁵ During the examination of a folder at the Instituto de Historia de Barcelona in 1987, Simon Wintle discov-

⁹² Birgit Kata, “Papier und Papp im archäologischen Fundspektrum–Bemerkungen zu einer unterschätzten Quellengattung für die Alltagsgeschichte des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit”, *Papier im mittelalterlichen Europa. Herstellung und Gebrauch*, ed. Carla Meyer, Sandra Schultz, and Bernd Schneidmüller. *Materielle Textkulturen*, 7 (Berlin, Munich, and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 275–306; here 275–9.

⁹³ Hannes Obermair, “Mosaiksteine der Schrift: Die spätmittelalterlichen Urkundenfragmente von Schloß Tirol,” *Das Geheimnis der Turrus Parva. Spuren hochmittelalterlicher Vergangenheit in Schloß Tirol*, exhibition catalog, Landesmuseum Schloss Tirol, April 4–Nov. 8, 1998, ed. Konrad Spindler. *Nearchos, Sonderheft 1* (Innsbruck: Golf Verlag, 1998), 128–40.

⁹⁴ Kata, “Papier und Papp” (see note 92), 299; Birgit Kata, “Katalogartikel zu drei vollständigen Spielkarten und einem Fragment,” *Geld und Glaube: Leben in evangelischen Reichsstädten*, exhibition catalog, Bayerische Landesausstellung in Memmingen 1998, ed. Wolfgang Jahn, Josef Kirmeier, Thomas Berger, and Evamaria Brockhoff. *Veröffentlichungen zur Bayerischen Geschichte und Kultur*, 37 (Augsburg: Haus der Bayrischen Geschichte, 1998), 159–160. *Spielkarten aus Kempten und Schwaben*, ed. Sigmar Radau and Jürgen F. Kranich. *Studien zur Spielkarte 25* (Berlin: Bube Dame König, 2011).

⁹⁵ Wörner, *Die Dame im Spiel* (see note 66), 43–55, who focuses on Italy and the origins of *tarocchi*, but makes no mention of Spain as a possible hub of early card games in Europe.

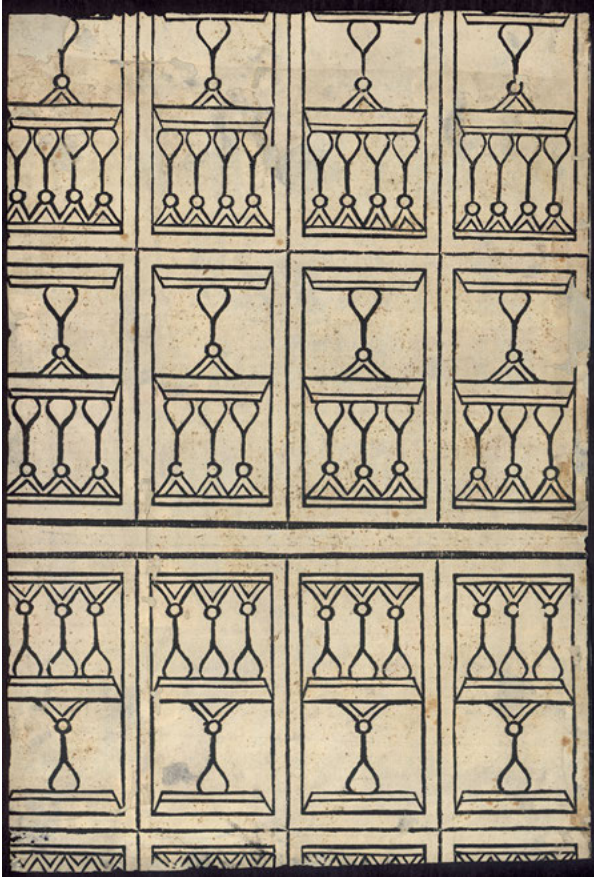


Fig. 2: One of the two “Moorish Sheets” (left), 1414 (?), Barcelona (?), Instituto Municipal de Historia de la Ciudad, Barcelona, inv. no. C07.04, 26388(B)

ered what might be the oldest known examples in Western Europe.⁹⁶ His findings consist of two fragmented sheets, consisting of a series of cards in woodcut aligned in rows, as they would have been before being painted and cut. No court cards survived, though, but there is evidence that the pimp cards ran from one to ten. The designs of the suit symbols – Swords, Discs, Cups, and Batons – on these “Moorish Sheets” (Fig. 2) are similar to those found on a Mamluk card deck, presumably from the sixteenth century and today preserved at the

⁹⁶ Simon Wintle, “A ‘Moorish’ Sheet of Cards,” *The Playing-Card* 15 (1987): 112–22.

Topkapı Palace in Istanbul.⁹⁷ Apart from what seemingly is the most complete set of early Islamic playing cards, fragments of other cards exist as well. For instance, there is a four or eight of Cups, from the thirteenth century or even before, that once belonged to the Collections of Dr. Edmund de Unger in London and is now kept at the Keir Collection of Islamic Art in Dallas, USA.⁹⁸ Michael Dummett believes that the “Moorish Sheets” of Barcelona represent “the very earliest set of European playing-cards that has come down to us,”⁹⁹ and were created around the year 1414. However, this does not necessarily mean that medieval Iberia was the first entry point for playing cards.

Textual proofs testifying the early existence of playing cards in the West also give little more than hints as to when cards may have arrived in Europe. One of the first mentions of *naip* (from Arab. *nāʾib*), the Catalan word for playing cards (*naipes* in Castilian), is a rhyme dictionary from 1371, the *Llibre de Concordances* by Jaume March. The publication date was only a few years before. The first mention of playing cards in Italy is made in a Florentine *Proviso* from March 23, 1376, now preserved at the Archivio di Stato. The year might be deceiving, though, as in Florence of the time, the new year would not begin before March 25, so that the year in question corresponds to 1377.¹⁰⁰ The presence of a game called *naib* is reported in Viterbo for 1379, but the account was not written down before 1476 by one Nicolo delle Tuccia (1400–1473/74).¹⁰¹ What makes this record remarkable, though, is that it links the game to “the lands of the Saracens” and thus once

97 Denning, *The Playing Cards of Spain* (see note 82), 20; L. A. [= Leo Ary] Mayer, *Mamluk Playing Cards*, with a frontispiece, 57 figures and 5 color plates. The L. A. Mayer memorial studies in Islamic art and archaeology, 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1971), who first published on this topic in 1939: L. A. [= Leo Ary] Mayer, “Mamluk Playing Cards,” *Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale* xxxviii (1939): 113–118. This almost complete pack consists of five suit symbols, including Cup, Coin, Sword, Polo-stick, and Staff. Except for the Polo-stick, the other four are the same in early Italian playing cards, especially the *tarocchi*. In turn, Mayer says that the court cards consisted of King (*malik*), Governor (*nāʾib malik*), a Second Governor (*nāʾib thānī*) and one of his helpers (*ʾaḥad al-ʾarkān malik*), while the pimp cards ranged from 1 to 10. See also Michael Dummett and Kamal Abu-Deeb, “Some Remarks on Mamluk Playing Cards,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 36 (1973): 106–28.

98 Mayer, *Mamluk Playing Cards* (see note 97), fig. 56. Dummett and Abu-Dheeb, “Some Remarks on Mamluk Playing Cards,” 114. Ernst J. Grube, “A Drawing of Wrestlers in the Cairo Museum of Islamic Art,” *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 3 (1985): 89–106; here 20, gives a list of objects kept at various collections of Islamic art, including fragments of playing cards. Accordingly, the inv. no. in question is Keir Coll. I. 52.

99 Michel Dummett, “The Earliest Spanish Playing Cards,” *The Playing-Card* 18 (1989): 6–15. Cf. Denning, *The Playing Cards of Spain* (see note 82), 20.

100 Denning, *The Playing Cards of Spain* (see note 82), 14.

101 I thank Mildred Budny for having provided me with these dates.

more strengthens the conclusion that cards had once come to Europe through the Islamic World.¹⁰²

For Castile and Aragón, there is even more textual proof for an Islamic origin, confirmed by names for certain card decks, such as “moriscas” and “damasquinas,” the latter probably meaning “of Damascus.”¹⁰³ In Perpignan of the year 1380, the presence of a certain Rodrigo Borges is recorded, with the profession of “pintor y naipero,” painter and card-maker.¹⁰⁴ Overall, various historical documents prove that already during the 1370s, playing cards were a fixed term in the Catalan language and the profession of playing-card makers well-established. The earliest known depiction of card players comes from an Italian manuscript, presumably from Naples, now at the British Library and dated 1353–1362.¹⁰⁵ From such evidence, we can deduce that the first playing cards made in Europe must have appeared at least around the year 1350, “perhaps drawn and painted individually like the Islamic cards contemporary with them, or possibly even stenciled or otherwise mechanically multiplied,”¹⁰⁶ and that Islamic cards circulated around the Mediterranean many years before. That playing cards came to Europe from the Islamic World – bringing with it, we should add, the practice of card shuffling – is further verified through iconographic comparisons between early European card decks and the aforementioned Mamluk cards.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the terms ‘naibe’ or ‘naipes’ used in Italy and Spain to identify card games derive from the name for Mamluk governors, who were part of the Mamluk court cards (*nā’ib malik* and *nā’ib thānī*).¹⁰⁸ The rapidness by which playing cards spread throughout Western Europe within a few decades demonstrates how much their manufacture played a crucial role in what can be called the “technological and commercial revolution of the Late Middle Ages.”¹⁰⁹

102 Denning, *The Playing Cards of Spain* (see note 82), 15. “Anno 1379 fu recato in Viterbo el gioco delle carti, che venne de Sercinia e chiamasi tra loro Naib,” see Mayer, *Mamluk Playing Cards* (see note 97), 7, who quotes Feliciano Bussi, *Istoria della città di Viterbo* (Rome: Bernabo, 1742), 213.

103 Denning, *The Playing Cards of Spain* (see note 82), 15.

104 Denning, *The Playing Cards of Spain* (see note 82), 16.

105 British Library, Additional MS 12228, fol. 313v.

106 Denning, *The Playing Cards of Spain* (see note 82), 17.

107 Mayer, *Mamluk Playing Cards* (see note 97).

108 Mayer, *Mamluk Playing Cards* (see note 97), 5, n. 2 claims that *naibi* had already been mentioned in the *Provigione Fiorentina* of March 23, 1376.

109 Müller, *Weisse Magie* (see note 81), 44, who refers to the existence of a “technological revolution” in the Late Middle Ages. Günter Bayerl and Karl Pichol, *Papier. Produkt aus Lumpen, Holz und Wasser. Kulturgeschichte der Naturwissenschaften und der Technik*, 27 (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1986), 38–39.

Playing cards were the “first circulating mass product on paper.”¹¹⁰ An important step in this process was the creation of cardboard, fabricated from glued layers of paper. In his *De diversis artibus*, Theophilus Presbyter (fl. early twelfth century) had already described how to make glue, albeit from animal products, and similar recipes can be found in a much later collection of instructions for paper-processing techniques compiled by Catherine nuns in fifteenth-century Nuremberg.¹¹¹

The *Stuttgarter Kartenspiel*: the Play between the Overt and Covert

Prohibitions of games from the fourteenth century provide the earliest textual proof of the existence of playing cards in southern Germany. Ulrike Wörner assumes that the political relations between the House of Wittelsbach and the Visconti family, whose members ruled over Lombardy and Milan between the late thirteenth and mid-fifteenth centuries, fostered the cultural transfer of card games from northern Italy to southern Germany. Bernabò Visconti (r. 1354–1385) married many of his ten legitimate daughters and one of his sons to noble houses north of the Alps, especially to the Habsburg and Wittelsbach families. His daughter Taddea Visconti (1351–1381), for example, married Stephen III of Bavaria-Ingolstadt (r. 1375–1413). This matrimonial policy promoted the transfer of knowledge and culture from Italy to Bavaria, which might have also included luxurious playing cards. Their high quality then at the Milan court is attested by the Visconti–Sforza tarot deck.¹¹² The card game historian Hellmut Rosenfeld maintains that the *Stuttgarter Kartenspiel*, the oldest preserved German card game, belongs to this historical context and further proposes that a member of the House of Wittelsbach might have commissioned it. In fact, its suit symbols – Duck, Falcon, Deer, and Dog – , inspired by the noble pastime of hunting, might be the result of cultural exchange between Paris, Milan, and Bavaria.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Müller, *Weisse Magie* (see note 81), 55.

¹¹¹ Müller, *Weisse Magie* (see note 81), 55. The book of recipes of the Monastery St. Catherine in Nuremberg (ca. 1470), MS Cent. VI, 89, Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg, with recipes on fols. 2r–55v. An excerpt thereof is published in Hans Boesch, “Zur Geschichte und technischen Verwendung von Papier,” *Mitteilungen aus dem Germanischen Nationalmuseum* (1893): 3–13; here 7.

¹¹² Wörner, *Die Dame im Spiel* (see note 66), 245–249.

¹¹³ Hellmut Rosenfeld, *Fünfhundert Jahre Münchner Spielkarten. Von kartenspielenden Fürsten zu Königen und Königen zu Kartenspiel-Königen* (Munich: Selbstverlag, 1988), 4. Cf. Wörner, *Die Dame im Spiel* (see note 66), 256. Rosenfeld believes that the original patron was Duke Louis VII

These symbols are furthermore divided into female and male suits: whereas the three court cards of Duck and Falcon are King, *Ober*¹¹⁴, and *Unter*, the three court cards of Deer and Dog are Queen, female *Ober*,¹¹⁵ and female *Unter*. The use of symbols related to hunting also exist in the *Ambraser Hofjagdspiel* (1440–1445) and an unnamed deck from Luxembourg.¹¹⁶

The *Stuttgarter Kartenspiel* was originally completed in southern Germany or Switzerland around the year 1430 (Fig. 3 a and b).¹¹⁷ The luxurious design, with an abundant use of gold leaf, and the large format (190 x 120 mm), indicate that the cards probably were created as showpieces. Many nonetheless carry signs of use, with the edges tattered. Of originally 52 cards, three are missing.¹¹⁸ The cardboard consists of six glued paper layers with a thickness of about 1 mm. The watermark – a hunting horn – indicates that the paper came from a paper mill in Ravensburg, where it was crafted between 1427 and 1430.¹¹⁹ This is little surprising, for Ravensburg had been the largest center of paper production north of the Alps since the end of the fourteenth century.

However, Ulm, not Ravensburg, was the German hub of playing card production. According to the chronicler Felix Fabri (1441–1502), during the second half of the fifteenth century there were so many card makers in Ulm that cards were sent to Italy, Sicily, and even the farthest islands by the barrel.¹²⁰ As German-

of Bavaria (r. 1413–1443), the son of Stephen III and Taddea Visconti, but Wörner believes that Elisabetta Visconti (1364–1432) and her husband Duke Ernest of Bavaria-Munich (r. 1397–1438) are just as likely. She furthermore stresses the importance of the Visconti daughters, whose move from Milan to Bavaria for their marriages played a crucial role in this cultural transfer; see Wörner, *Die Dame im Spiel* (see note 66), 258.

114 The *Ober* is the court card in the German and Swiss styles of playing cards that corresponds to the Queen in French decks, usually depicted as a nobleman or officer of a higher rank than an *Unter*, the lowest court card in Swiss and German card decks.

115 The female *Ober* and *Unter* are depicted as female courtiers of higher (*Ober*) and lower (*Unter*) rank.

116 Wörner, *Die Dame im Spiel* (see note 66), 254.

117 Wörner, *Die Dame im Spiel* (see note 66). Ulrike Wörner, “Das Stuttgarter Spiel (um 1429) – ein Abbild der Jagd nach Liebe. Ikonologische Betrachtungen zu einem Kartenspiel aus dem Hause Wittelsbach,” *Bayerisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* (2011): 27–39.

118 Wörner, *Die Dame im Spiel* (see note 66), 256.

119 It is a fascinating coincidence that the German town of Ravensburg, the greatest paper-producing center north of the Alps during the late Middle Ages, would much later become the headquarters of the company *Ravensburger*, one of Germany’s largest producers of games and jigsaw puzzles, founded by Otto Robert Maier (1852–1925), son of a bookseller and publisher. In fact, the family had worked in the book business for generations.

120 “Sic et factores et pictores chartarum tot sunt in Ulma, ut in vasis chartas mittant in Italiam, Siciliam et in extremas insulas maris et ad omnem plagam,” Felix Fabri, *Tractatus de civitate*



Fig. 3: a. Queen of Deers (*Hirsch-Königin*) (left);
b. the back of the card (right), both from the *Stuttgarter Kartenspiel*, ca. 1430, Inv. KK grau 15, Landesmuseum Württemberg (I thank Mr. Chris Gebel from the Landesmuseum Württemberg for providing me with this image.)

speaking regions were the first to use woodcut for playing cards, they became leading in the mass production of this commodity, whereas Italy, for example, adopted the new technology rather late. Germany consequently tried to capture the Italian market by producing playing cards with Italian suit symbols. France improved the efficiency of production even more by introducing the simplified, geometrical suit symbols we know today: “The memorability and clarity of the

Ulmensi, de eius origine, ordine, regimine, de civibus eius et statu, ed. Gustav Veesenmeyer (Tübingen: Literarischer Verein in Stuttgart, 1889), 146. There is a recent translation of the work into German: Felix Fabri, *Traktat über die Stadt Ulm*, trans. and commented by Folker Reichert. Biblioteca Alemannica (2012; Norderstedt: Ed. Isele, 2014), 138–39. Hellmut Rosenfeld, “Ulmer Kartendrucker um 1500 als Produzent zum Export nach Italien und Frankreich,” *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 18 (1977): col. 525–42. Hellmut Rosenfeld, “Die Spielkarten und ihre Farbzeichen,” *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 1 (1956/58): 122–28.

French suit symbols later replaced all others.”¹²¹ This led to a substantial rationalization, enabling the use of templates for pip cards, so that the work of card painters would be required for the court cards only.¹²²

One detail of the cards of the *Stuttgarter Kartenspiel* that might at first seem rather trivial, actually represents an important innovation: All backs are identical and consist of a simple layer of red lead paint (*Mennige*) and vermillion (Fig. 3b).¹²³ This coating prevented light from shining through the cards, especially when they were held, thus making it impossible for co-players to guess their values from the backside. This provision is another indicator for how much the development of playing cards depended on developments in paper production and printing techniques – a relational ‘triangle’ whose significance Gottlob Immanuel Breitkopf (1719–1794), a Leipzig-based music publisher, had already described in the eighteenth century. He argued that, aside from votive pictures, playing cards were the first mass application for woodcut. In fact, a rivalry and cross-fertilization between both media emerged, so that card painters would often paint votive pictures as well.¹²⁴

***Ex insidiis*: Establishing Justice through Material Objects**

What hand have I drawn? – this is the central question anxiously asked by most card players before picking up their stacks. Due to their non-transparency, the backsides of playing cards are like screens, onto which the anxiety of unknowingness can be projected. As the foundation of suspense in card games, this anticipation is not a displeasing experience. Were the versos not opaque, the game

121 Hellmut Rosenfeld, “Erzählende Volkspublizistik im ausgehenden Mittelalter. Französische Spielkarten um 1500 als Dokumente verlorener Volksliteratur,” *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 53 (1978): 90–95; here 90.

122 Rosenfeld, “Erzählende Volkspublizistik” (see note 121), 90.

123 For more technological details, see Ernst-Ludwig Richter and Heide Härlin, “The ‘Stuttgarter Kartenspiel’ – Scientific Examination of the Pigments and Paint Layers of Medieval Playing Cards,” *Studies in Conservation* 21.1 (1976): 18–24.

124 Müller, *Weisse Magie* (see note 81), 53. Johann Gottlob Immanuel Breitkopf, *Versuch, den Ursprung der Spielkarten, die Einführung des Leinenpapiers und den Anfang der Holzschnidekunst in Europa zu erforschen*, Erster Theil: welcher die Spielkarten und das Leinenpapier enthält. Mit vierzehn Kupfertafeln (Leipzig: J. G. I. Breitkopf, 1784), 44. There is a modern reprint of the first volume, Johann Gottlob Immanuel Breitkopf, *Versuch, den Ursprung der Spielkarten, die Einführung des Leinenpapiers, und den Anfang der Holzschnidekunst in Europa zu erforschen* (Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der DDR, 1985).

would become pointless, since only the lack of full information, based on the interplay between visibility and invisibility, makes card games exciting. Calculating the probability for drawing certain cards and combinations of cards in a game was much more difficult than for the much older dice games, and it has already been discussed that simple methods for the quantification of probability were already known in the thirteenth century and that even in antiquity, people had an – at least intuitive – knowledge of probability.¹²⁵ However, a first generalized mathematical theory of probability would not emerge before the posthumously published *Ars conjectandi* (1713) by Swiss mathematician Jacob Bernoulli (1654/55–1705).¹²⁶ His introduction of the urn model – which brings us back to ancient lots – made it possible to demonstrate how and why card games belong to a different type of chance than dice games. Most card games involve sampling without replacement – you take away card for card from an accordingly shrinking stack – whereas dice games comprise draws with replacement: the numbers on the dice stay the same for every cast.¹²⁷ Bernoulli's book rendered obsolete Christiaan Huygens's (1629–1695) *De Ratiociniis in Ludo Aleae* (1657), which to that date had been the most comprehensive study on probability theory. Huygens had analyzed card games as well, but he had not been the first to do so. More than a hundred years earlier, Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576) had already undertaken this endeavor. In fact, until the year 1654, the birth year of modern stochastics, Cardano's *De ludo Aleae liber* (1565) had been the most detailed study on probability.¹²⁸ Therein he calculated probabilities for two and three dice, mentioned astragals, and provided some simple calculations for the probability in

125 Ulrike Ehmig, "Antiker Umgang mit Wahrscheinlichem: Einige Beobachtungen in den dokumentarischen Quellen," *Eirene* 49 (2013): 90–116.

126 As to the development of modern probability theory in the seventeenth century in France and its influence on literature, see the contribution by Michael Call in this volume.

127 "Quidam duobus calculis albo nigro[ue], in urna[m] reconditis praemium proponit tribud A, B, C, eam lege, ut qui album extraxerit, praemio potiat, si secus omnes faxint, praemio quoque careant. Primus autem extrahet ipse A, & reponet; secundus B, tertius C. Quaerunt singulorum sortes?" Jakob Bernoulli, *Ars conjectandi* (Basel, 1713), pars tertia, problema I, 139. For a problem on card-play, see pars tertia, problema V: "A certat cum B, quod ipse ex 40 chartis lusoriis, id est, 10 sujusque specie, 4 chartas extracturus sit, ita ut ex unaqueque, specie habeat unam. Quaeritur ratio sortium?" An English translation is Jacob Bernoulli, *The Art of Conjecturing, together with Letter to a Friend on Sets in Court Tennis*, trans. Edith Sylla (1713; Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

128 Girolamo Cardano, *De ludo aleae*, Hieronymus Cardanus Mediolanensis, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 1.10 (Lyon: Huguetan & Ravaud, 1663), 262–276. A modern edition is Girolamo Cardano, *Omnia Opera. Hieronymus Cardanus: Faksimile-Neudruck der Ausgabe Lyon 1663*, ed. August Buck, 5 vols. (Stuttgart/Bad Canstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1966).

card games. Moreover, Cardano probably took his calculations for dice games from early prints of *De Vetula*.¹²⁹

As Cardano states in his autobiographical writings, he had become a passionate gambler around the year 1525,¹³⁰ a leisure activity that spurred his intellectual interest, and so he began to collect facts about games. This eventually led to the treatise *De ludis*, of which we, unfortunately, only know the printed version *De ludo aleae* from 1663.¹³¹ His practical experience informed his theoretical work, and the central difference he gives between card and dice games was certainly based on such first-hand knowledge: “Card games differ from dice games, which happen in the open (*aperta*), in that they are carried out insidiously (*ex insidiis*), because they are secretive (*occultae*).”¹³² Dice games are open, meaning that the outcome of a cast die is plain for everyone to see; they are games of complete information. In contrast, the information in card games is fragmented; in the very beginning, after the dealing process, players do not even know the values of their own cards. In the course of the game, however, players gain more and more information that allows them to better anticipate what might happen next. The lack of complete information makes card games seem “insidious”; co-players can play their cards like ambush attacks. This interplay with seeing and not seeing, with knowing and not knowing, is essential for card games, and this parallels them with the mystical, which similarly relies on the interplay between known and unknown. This certainly accounts for one reason why cards have been likened to the occult from an early stage on, to which Cardano seemingly alludes himself (*occultae*). Most fittingly, there is a long tradition of calling the richly illustrated trump cards of Tarot the Major Arcana.

Cardano’s central topic, however, is not so much a mathematical question but a moral one, revolving around issues of justice and equality. In fact, Aristotle had a great impact on Cardano’s work and not only shaped his ideas on fortune and luck, but also of justice (esp. *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book V, iii, 5–6).¹³³ Ac-

129 David Bellhouse, “Decoding Cardano’s *Liber de Ludo Aleae*,” *Historia Mathematica* 32 (2005): 180–202; here 197–198, who mentions two early printed versions (ca. 1475, Perugia, and 1479, Cologne).

130 Øystein Ore, *Cardano. The Gambling Scholar* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), 7–8.

131 Bellhouse, “Decoding Cardano’s *Liber de Ludo Aleae*” (see note 129), 184.

132 Cardano, *De ludo aleae* (see note 128), 267: “Differt ab Alea quod illa aperta sit, Ludi Characterum fiunt ex insidiis, nam occultae sunt.”

133 Bellhouse, “Decoding Cardano’s *Liber de Ludo Aleae*” (see note 129), esp. 188–191. Jean-Claude Margolin, “Cardan, interprète d’Aristote,” id., *Platon et Aristote à la Renaissance, XVIe Colloque International de Tours* (Paris: Vrin, 1976), 307–334. Massimo Tamborini, “Matematica, tempo e previsione ne *Liber de Ludo Aleae*,” *Girolamo Cardano. Le Opere, le Fonti, la Vita*, ed.

according to Aristotle, justice is what is equal and unjust is what is unequal, conditions valid for both things and persons. Only justice can thus prevent the outbreak of quarrels and complaints. According to Cardano, all players should therefore have equal chances to win, something we would today call *fair play*.¹³⁴ Cardano asks under what conditions the gambling at cards and dice can “be considered a just act,”¹³⁵ and his innovation consists in that he uses mathematics for solving this problem.

Therefore, the main interest of *De ludo aleae* was not calculation; instead, “Cardano provides knowledge (*scientia*) of various aspects of games in order both to protect oneself against injustice and to provide a situation in which the gain from gambling can be considered to be of the best type.”¹³⁶ That is why the book not only includes rules for calculating the probability in games but also gives advice as to how to protect oneself against cheating, including palming cards, as well as the use of false dice, marked cards, tilted gaming tables, and kibitzers. Accordingly, David Bellhouse argues that the book should be regarded as an early example of the literary genre of game manuals, which became more frequent in the seventeenth century, for example, with Charles Cotton’s (1630–1687) *The Compleat Gamester* (1674), and which reached an apex during the eighteenth century.¹³⁷

Cardano viewed knowledge, skill, or *scientia*, of games as a means for assuring that a game be just.¹³⁸ He believed that a player both skilled and eager to take risks would receive the greatest gain. Skill, though, did not entail the skillfulness of an elaborate cheater, of course. Instead, Cardano stressed the use of memory as a legitimate skill, especially in card games, where remembering what cards have been played out can be advantageous.¹³⁹ In this regard, card games are instruments for training the *ars memoriae*, a quality that Thomas Murner (1475–

Marialuisa Baldi and Guido Canziani (Milan: F. Angeli, 1999), 227–71. Aristotle, *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. J. A. K. Thompson (London: Penguin, 1955).

134 For many historians, Aristotle’s writings are a starting point for the history of probability, see S. Sambursky, “On the Possible and Probable in Ancient Greece,” *Osiris* 12 (1956): 35–48. O. B. Sheynin, “On the Prehistory of the Theory of Probability,” *Archive for History of Exact Sciences* 12.2 (1974): 97–141. Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). Evelyn Matheson Styan, “Chance in Aristotle Physics,” *Chance* 11.4 (1998): 11–6.

135 Bellhouse, “Decoding Cardano’s *Liber de Ludo Aleae*” (see note 129), 186.

136 Bellhouse, “Decoding Cardano’s *Liber de Ludo Aleae*” (see note 129), 199.

137 Bellhouse, “Decoding Cardano’s *Liber de Ludo Aleae*” (see note 129), 180.

138 Bellhouse, “Decoding Cardano’s *Liber de Ludo Aleae*” (see note 129), 192.

139 Cardano, *De ludo aleae* (see note 128), ch. 23. Bellhouse, “Decoding Cardano’s *Liber de Ludo Aleae*” (see note 129), 193.

1537) had already exploited for his *Chartiludium logicae*, a set of didactic playing cards devoted to the internalization of syllogistic rules¹⁴⁰:

Differunt ludi Chartarum ab ludis Aleae, in quibus industria locii habet, quod Alea de futuro iudicium fert, & magis licet de alieno successu, tamen etiam de proprio, Chartarum autem ludi de praesentibus, & alienis solum iudicium requirunt. At de praesentibus coniectari, prudentis est magis viri, & humana sapientis; de futuris autem quamquam sit alia ratio coniecturae, non quod fututa sint, sed cui potius iure innitendum sit, est tamen diuini potius hominis, aut insani, nam melancolici diuinare solent. Etenim in Alea nil habes certum signum, fed omnia plane in pura fortuna repofita sunt, si alea aequalis sit.

[Card games differ from dice games even when these require skill, because play with dice depends more on judgement of future events; mostly, to be sure, on the success of one's opponent but also on one's own success, while play with cards requires only judgment of one's present holdings and of one's opponent's. To conjecture about the present is more the part of a prudent man skilled in human wisdom but to conjecture about the future, although it is another kind of guessing, not as to what will be, but what we may rightly count on, is nevertheless the part rather of a divine man, or of an insane one, for the melancholy are given to prophesy. For in play with dice you have no certain sign, but everything depends entirely on pure chance, if the die is honest.]¹⁴¹

In his deliberations on cheating at card games, Cardano also talks about material aspects. Bellhouse observes that much mention of the techniques of cheating at dice and card games is made in English roguery literature from the sixteenth century.¹⁴² Fraud in card games was widespread, and likewise a demand for protecting oneself from it. Cardano's first rule consisted of the simple advice to stay away from people with fraudulent intentions.¹⁴³ In case the intentions of co-play-

140 Thomas Murner, *Chartiludium logicae sive logica memorativa* (Cracow: J. Haller, 1507). Murner re-used the designs of his cards in a textbook on logic, the *Logica memorativa / Chartiludium logice / siue totius dialectice memoria* (Strasbourg: Johannes Grüninger, 1509). Detlef Hoffmann, "Die mnemonischen Kartenspiele Thomas Murners," *Seelenmaschinen: Gattungstraditionen, Funktionen und Leistungsgrenzen der Mnemotechniken vom späten Mittelalter bis zum Beginn der Moderne*, ed. Jörg Jochen Berns (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau, 2000), 585–604. Rafał Wójcik, "STRASBURG – FREIBURG – PARIS – KRAKAU. Zu den möglichen Inspirationsquellen Thomas Murners, des Autors von *Chartiludium logicae sive logica memorativa* (1507/1509)," *Daphnis* 40 (2011): 63–88.

141 Cardano, *De ludo aleae* (see note 128), 272. Gerolamo Cardano, "The Book on Games of Chance," trans. Sydney Henry Gould, *Cardano. The Gambling Scholar*, ed. Øystein Ore (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), 181–242; here 232.

142 Bellhouse, "Decoding Cardano's *Liber de Ludo Aleae*" (see note 129), 193; cf. David Bellhouse, "The Role of Roguery in the History of Probability," *Statistical Science* 8.4 (1993): 410–20.

143 "Now, in general, gambling is nothing but fraud and number and luck. Against fraud the one remedy is to beware of men of deceitful mind; for, just as good man cannot be a cheat, so a cheat cannot be a good man," Cardano, "The Book on Games of Chance" (see note 141), 211.

ers were uncertain – which they usually are – one should play for small stakes only. Also, witnesses should be present: “Ubi de dolo suspicaris de parua pecunia certa, adhibe speculatores, chartas intermisce non superpone, & si aliter superponat, non misceat, dolo agit, (When you suspect fraud, play for small stakes, have spectators, shuffle (*intermisce*) the cards instead of merely collecting them, and if another collects them without shuffling, he is acting fraudulently.)”¹⁴⁴

Cardano then gives a list of fraudulent methods, including the marking and soaping of cards to make them slide better, as well as the use of rings with mirrors that enabled players to see the front of cards when dealt face down. It would therefore be best if everyone brought their own cards, “and if others send out to buy cards, let them buy from men you can trust.”¹⁴⁵ From this, we can infer that there must have been a good supply with playing cards at the time, at least in urban regions. How much the material design of playing cards informs the just course of play is emphasized in relation to the question of how to make sure they are not fraudulent: “Inspice intus, extra, a lateribus in angulis tange, si asperae nimis leues durae inaequales, noli ludere; antequam enim cognoscas forsan te spoliabunt. (Examine them inside and out and edgewise; touch the corners; if they are rough, or too smooth, or hard, or uneven, do not play; for before you can recognize what is wrong, your opponents will perhaps ruin you.)”¹⁴⁶ Again and similar to earlier observations, material equalization is paramount for establishing unblemished randomness and justice in play. Cardano furthermore warns his readers to “let no one examine the cards in private,” and remarks that in the game *Primero* “it is customary to uncover the cards from the back and from above as little as possible so that the kibitzers cannot see anything.”¹⁴⁷

Conclusion: At the Path to Perfect Mixture

The transmission of playing cards from the Islamic World to the Latin West brought with it shuffling as a new randomization technique that would soon

144 Cardano, *De ludo aleae* (see note 128), 269; Cardano, “The Book on Games of Chance” (see note 134), 211.

145 Cardano, “The Book on Games of Chance” (see note 134), 211.

146 Cardano, *De ludo aleae* (see note 128), 269; Cardano, “The Book on Games of Chance” (see note 134), 211.

147 Cardano, *De ludo aleae* (see note 128), 269; Cardano, “The Book on Games of Chance” (see note 134), 211.

after become as ubiquitous as card games themselves. The pleasure of card games is rooted in the material qualities of paper: the randomization through shuffling and distribution, as well as the theatricality of concealing and revealing information are both material practices inscribed into the objects themselves. Alongside a process of gradual standardization that followed legal prohibitions based on moral restrictions, card games would eventually reach a cultural status that allowed them to be used as models for existential contingency even by theologians, for which Andreas Strobl's *Spiritual Card Game* was an illustrative example. Here fate is identical with the cards dealt by God, in a fashion similar to how a stage director distributes the parts of a play to his actors. Whereas John of Rheinfelden felt the urge to link card games to the *rota fortunae* to give his readers a well-known trope they could relate to, later authors had little need for such auxiliary structures.

There is little one can do about the hand received through higher forces; but one can learn how to play out one's hand as skillfully as possible to gain as much as possible; and, as Cardano pointed out, for many card games skill depends on memory. The relatively autonomous agency of card-players establishes a crucial difference in relation to older models of chance, such as the *rota fortunae*, dice, or lots. The increasing interest in probability theory throughout the seventeenth century motivated more thorough, scientific investigations of card games and shuffling practices. From these approaches of modern probability theory emerged an abstract idea of contingency cleansed from any anthropocentrism and thus from any concrete, sensual experience. Bernouilli's generalized urn model took over and replaced cards with the sampling of different colored balls in an urn.

Cardano reminds us that card games are rooted in a complex ecological network of human and non-human agents, of material objects, rules, technologies, and media, but also the demands of players, their moral values – such as justice and honesty – and discourses on randomness and chance, probability, and free will. That objects can be regarded agents of moral values is a notion already observable in Alfonso X's work. Cardano followed a similar path in his analysis of card games, especially in respect to how the design of the playing card is a co-agent for ensuring fair play. The introduction of opaque backsides, for which the *Stuttgarter Kartenspiel* is an early example, served a similar purpose. And even though playing cards can generally be made from other materials, such as wood or metal, paper was and still is the most common one. It is cheap, flat, and light-weight, which are some of the properties that make paper objects so mobile. As a basic material of the printing industry, paper suits the purposes of mass production, and there are almost no limits as to its design possibilities.

Technological innovations for card games spurred technological innovations in other industrial areas as well, as seen with the application of innovative printing techniques in the Late Middle Ages. Today there is a diversity of playing cards for various purposes that call for special materials, such as synthetic coatings that guarantee high robustness, durability, and flexibility, as well as a good grip and gliding for shuffles.¹⁴⁸ There even are decks devoted to shuffling artistry, so-called *freestyle card shuffling* or *cardistry*, with special material properties,¹⁴⁹ as well as concepts for using electronic paper for cards.¹⁵⁰ Yet the most important ingredient of most card decks remains nothing else but glued paper,¹⁵¹ and among its many material properties, the basic distinction between verso and recto still is one of the most important ones.

Card games hence offer a very instructive research object for analyzing the relationship between materiality, game mechanics, ludic experience, and related social, political, and scientific discourses. Prevalent throughout the examples discussed is the notion of establishing justice through material equalization. Equality was a structural element found on various levels: The equalization of randomization relies on the standardization of gaming objects, and both together guarantee that all players have the same starting conditions. Therein lies an agential shift from subjects to objects as impartial and unbiased judges. The less control human agents have over the randomization process, the higher the degree of randomization. Scientific knowledge of probability can therefore serve as a means for establishing more justice among people – an idea already present in Alfonso's deliberations on the material properties of ideal dice. A complete elimination of intentionality is, however, practically impossible, since the design of a random generator and its operation are the results of (materialized) intentions. Human interference through physical contact with an object can be reduced to as little as pushing a button, turning a crank, shaking dice, or shuf-

148 Kathleen Wowk, *Playing Cards of the World* (Guildford, Surrey: Lutterworth, 1983). H. T. Morley, *Old and Curious Playing Cards* (Secaucus, NJ: Wellfleet Press, 1989).

149 A classic text on card tricks is S. W. Erdnase, *The Expert at the Card Table: A Treatise on the Science and Art of Manipulating Cards* (Chicago: C. T. Powner, 1902). Johann Nepomuk Hofzinser, *Kartenkünste*. Bibliotheca magica, 6 (1910; Zurich: Olms, 1983).

150 Andrew P. Connors and Marc A. Rossi, "Electronic Playing Card," U.S. Patent Application Publication US 2008/0234024 A1, Sep 25, 2008.

151 The Cincinnati-based United States Printing Company (the United States Playing Card Company since 1894) has been manufacturing the popular Bicycle Deck Design as of 1885. Joe Robinson, *Playing Card Collector's Handbook, Description and List, Bicycle Brand Playing Cards*, n. p., 1955. Tom Dawson and Judy Dawson, "The United States Playing Card Company," *The Hochman Encyclopedia of American Playing Cards*, ed. Tom Dawson, Judy Dawson, and Gene Hochman (Stamford, CT: U.S. Games Systems, 2000), 81–123, esp. 89–91.

fling cards, but this intervention will still involve some kind of (corporeal) control and determination.

Similar to many other forms of gaming, card-playing is both a material and immaterial practice. The materiality of cards, even though a constitutive substrate of games, is 'forgotten' most of the time by players, and instead re-signified as a pathway into the symbolic game world. In this light, shuffling resembles an alchemistic ritual that transforms matter into symbols, and order into chaos, which becomes re-ordered and determined at the end of play, whose course thereby mimics birth, death, and rebirth. From an alchemistic standpoint, the search for perfect randomness resembles the search for perfect mixture. Play, not only of cards, is a material-discursive practice that continuously negotiates the boundaries between the material and the discursive.¹⁵² Even though we still know so little about what shuffling exactly looked like during the late Middle Ages and early modern age, the findings so far establish that, as a material-discursive practice, even back then play had the tendency to transcend the matter upon which it depended.

¹⁵² Karen Barad, "Agential Realism: How Material-Discursive Practices Matter," *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2007), 132–88.

Michael Call

Calculated Losses: Molière, Regnard, and the Changing Comic Gamblers of Seventeenth-Century France

Early modern France was an age of play, its leisure time and social spaces shaped significantly by the public and private interest in dice, cards, lotteries, and other forms of gaming. Thomas Kavanagh has called the period between 1660 and 1789 the “heyday of gambling in France,” adding that the period was “marked by what was nothing less than a national obsession with chance and gambling in all its forms.”¹ Given the pervasive nature of the activity, it is not surprising that one of the other great pastimes of that era, theater, would take an interest, particularly given comedy’s traditional injunction to represent contemporary society, with all of its foibles, obsessions, and mannerisms. However, seventeenth-century France was also an age in which concepts like play, gambling, chance, and the random were very much *in play*, their meanings evolving as Western culture underwent a historic shift in mentalities related to the development of probability mathematics. This shift can in some ways be tracked through the comedic representation of two gamblers at thirty years’ remove from each other: Molière’s Alcipe from *Les Fâcheux* (1661) and Jean-François Regnard’s Valère from *Le Joueur* (1696). While in both cases the joke is clearly on the gambler, the plays effectively stage the *play* in play, that is, the capacity for movement and change as gambling in France undergoes a conceptual revolution. When Valère loses his game of *tric-trac*, more than three decades after Alcipe lamented his loss at *piquet*, what is funny about chance has changed, because chance itself had changed.

The history of probability presents us with a fascinating example of a profound alteration taking place within an ancient and almost universal human practice.² All human societies play, and for millennia play has involved an en-

¹ Thomas Kavanagh, *Dice, Cards, Wheels: A Different History of French Culture* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 68.

² Of gambling, Gerda Reith states, “One of the most striking features to emerge from a cursory glance at the phenomenon is its almost universal prevalence throughout history and across cultures: it unites people as diverse as the ancient Greeks and the North American Indians with the

agement with chance in the form of objects (dice, cards, lots, wheels) designed to produce differing results.³ As the historian Ian Hacking has written, “It is hard to find a place where people use no randomizers. Yet theories of frequency, betting, randomness and probability appear only recently.”⁴ The starting date assigned to that monumental shift in mentalities is 1654, the year of the correspondence between Blaise Pascal and Pierre de Fermat in which the two French mathematicians worked out the solution to a problem about how to divide up fairly the stakes of an interrupted game. It was not the first attempt to calculate mathematical odds or probabilities, nor was it the first time that this specific question had been posed, but earlier examples were isolated and in some cases deeply flawed.⁵ The Pascal-Fermat correspondence, by contrast, gave rise to a sustained and continuous engagement with the subject and spurred the development of what Hacking has called “an absent family of ideas” associated with probability and randomness, including actuarial statistics and new models for assessing evidence and testimony.⁶ While people had thought about likelihood before, people in early modern France, and soon all over Europe, began thinking about likelihood in new, mathematical ways.

By extension, this means that European gamblers from 1654 onwards were at the epicenter of a major cultural development, potentially the first group of players in human history to approach their games armed with an actual calculation of the odds.⁷ In an early example, Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole, Pascal’s associates at Port-Royal, introduced their readers to some simple calculations in *La Logique ou L’Art de penser* in 1662 regarding the fairness of betting games, noting that in a game like a lottery where the house takes a cut:

inhabitants of modern western societies.” Eadem, *The Age of Chance: Gambling in Western Culture*. Routledge Studies in Social and Political Thought (London: Routledge, 1999), 1.

3 Michael Conrad in this volume provides an insightful discussion of these “material gaming devices,” with a particular focus on early modern playing cards and the “material-discursive practice” of shuffling (“Randomization in Paper: Shuffling as a Material Practice in the Late Middle Ages and Early Modernity”).

4 Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability*, 2nd ed. (1975; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 2.

5 For a discussion of the solutions proposed by Pacioli, Tartaglia, and Cardano, see James Franklin, *The Science of Conjecture: Evidence and Probability before Pascal* (Baltimore, MD, and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 296–98.

6 Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability* (see note 4), 1.

7 Contrasting this with the gambling practices in the Roman Empire (where the payouts of the dice games were not commensurate with the actual mathematical odds), Ian Hacking notes, “Someone with only the most modest knowledge of probability mathematics could have won himself the whole of Gaul in a week” (*Taming of Chance* [see note 4], 3).

[I]l arrive de là que la probabilité de la perte surpasse plus la probabilité du gain, que l'avantage qu'on espère ne surpasse le désavantage auquel on s'expose, qui est de perdre ce qu'on y met.

[It follows from this that the probability of loss surpasses the probability of gain, that the advantage that we hope for does not surpass the disadvantage to which we expose ourselves, which is to lose what we have bet.⁸]

Similarly, Pascal in the posthumous *Pensées* will argue that a calculation of mathematical expectations may show that there are some gambling games that our reason would order us to play. As he writes, “Or quand on travaille pour demain et pour l'incertain, on agit avec raison, car on doit travailler pour l'incertain, par la règle des partis qui est démontrée” (Now when we work for tomorrow and the uncertain, we act with reason, since we should work for the uncertain, according to the rule of wagers which has been demonstrated).⁹ In other words, in a game where the odds would suggest that we are more likely to win than to lose, rationally we should play, an argument that Pascal will use elsewhere as the foundation for his famous wager regarding the decision to believe in the face of the uncertainty of God's existence.¹⁰

It is at the historical crossroads between calculated mathematical expectation and older notions of luck that the first modern gambler appears on the French stage. In 1661, a year before Arnauld and Nicole's *Logique*, Molière staged his new play *Les Fâcheux*, whose premiere was by all accounts a watershed moment.¹¹ A composite work, *Les Fâcheux* was the result of a collaboration between Molière and the choreographer Beauchamp, and it was also the first example of a new theatrical genre, the *comédie-ballet*, that Molière would continue to explore throughout his career in productions such as *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* and *Le Malade imaginaire*. In his forward to the printed play, Molière notes that *Les Fâcheux* was consequently “un mélange qui est nouveau pour nos Théâtres” (a mixture that is new for our theaters) and adds that “il peut servir d'idée à

⁸ Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole, *La Logique ou L'Art de penser* (Paris: Flammarion, 1970), 429. All translations from French are my own.

⁹ Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. Michel Le Guern (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 345.

¹⁰ Pascal, *Pensées* (see note 9), 248–51.

¹¹ *Les Fâcheux* formed part of the entertainment that Nicolas Fouquet, Louis XIV's superintendent of finances, offered to the visiting king and his court in the garden of the minister's new château at Vaux-le-Vicomte, an event that would serve as a catalyst for Fouquet's subsequent arrest and lifetime imprisonment on charges of embezzlement.

d'autres choses, qui pourraient être méditées avec plus de loisir" (it can serve as an idea for other things that could be worked out with more available time).¹²

However, it was not *Les Fâcheux*'s combination of spoken theater and danced *intermèdes* that struck Molière's contemporary Jean de La Fontaine at the premiere as innovative and potentially influential. Writing to his friend François de Maucroix about Molière's new play, La Fontaine celebrated how Molière's characters departed from broad farcical caricatures and instead derived their humor from their close imitation of contemporary manners:

Nous avons changé de méthode;
Jodelet n'est plus à la mode,
Et maintenant il ne faut pas
Quitter la nature d'un pas.

[We have changed methods;
Jodelet is no longer in fashion
And now one must not
Depart from nature by one step.¹³]

Les Fâcheux confirmed a direction in Molière's theater that had begun in 1659 with his first Parisian triumph, *Les Précieuses ridicules*, a one-act farce that had satirized the specialized language and affected behavior of a certain subset of Parisian women. *Les Fâcheux* returned to this close imitation of contemporary mannerisms, staging recognizably current attitudes, interests, and language for Louis XIV's court (and later the paying public) while widening the comedic target. Instead of relying on traditional stock characters, the play derived its interest from its sequential parade of roles pulled from Molière's own society, introducing these characters through the simplest of plot structures: a young man who desperately wants to have a *tête-à-tête* with the woman he loves, but is constantly interrupted by people demonstrating some form of contemporary mania or obsession, including hunting, music, dueling, theater, and, importantly, gambling.

The gambler Alcipe only appears in a single scene of *Les Fâcheux*, but he is significant for a couple of reasons. In the first place, gambling is the principal (and almost the only) feature of his character – he passes his entire time in the play relating to the protagonist, Éraste, the details of a game of *piquet* that he has lost the day before. Secondly, like the other bothersome characters in

¹² Molière, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Georges Forestier and Claude Bourqui. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), 1:150. All Molière quotations are taken from this edition.

¹³ Jean de La Fontaine in *Recueil des textes et documents du XVII^e siècle relatifs à Molière*, ed. Georges Mongrédien, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1965), 1:152.

the play, Alcipe's complete immersion in his mania means that he speaks with a specialized vocabulary and narrow worldview. While this makes him a suitable comic target, it also means that Alcipe introduces to the French stage the new language of card games and the psychology of those who play them. In describing his game of *piquet*, Alcipe assumes a deep familiarity with the rules and the typical strategies of *piquet*, describing in detail the cards in his hand and the play of his opponent, while employing the game's unique terms ("un pic," "une quinte major," "capot") which would have appeared hopelessly arcane to the uninitiated.¹⁴

As he accosts Érate, it becomes evident that Alcipe is deeply upset, and this trouble is grounded in a notion of expectation. In the detailed account that he provides Érate of the game that he has just played, Alcipe explains that he needed only two more points to win, while his opponent needed thirty. However, in the subsequent trick-taking phase of the game, Alcipe loses the first ten tricks. On the eleventh and penultimate trick, he is obligated to decide whether to discard the ace of hearts or the ace of clubs and decides on hearts, only to see his opponent play the six of hearts as his last card. By virtue of winning every single trick, Alcipe's opponent scores all the points necessary to snatch victory from the jaws of almost certain defeat.

Like the hunter later in the play who is upset at someone breaking the highly contrived conventions of the sport, the gambler in *Les Fâcheux* is painted as eccentric and strange, caring inordinately about things that the broader audience might dismiss as trivial. For Érate, who undoubtedly represents the play's normative point of view, Alcipe is a fool and nothing more than an impediment to far more important matters, namely his romantic pursuit of his love interest Orphise. The gambler's exaggerated response to his loss ("Un coup assurément à se pendre en public" [a blow, assuredly, to make me hang myself in public]),¹⁵ his meticulous recounting of minutiae like the particular cards in his hand, and his obscure language all make him a suitable target for ridicule. Safe in their privileged vantage points, the play's audience could laugh (even if some must have laughed knowingly or self-deprecatingly) at Alcipe and the way in which his thoughts and emotions are bound up so thoroughly in something so removed

¹⁴ Molière, *Œuvres complètes* (see note 12), 1:167. Charles Cotton, in his 1674 English description of the game, will largely retain these foreign terms (*picy*, *quinte major*, *capet*). See Charles Cotton, *The Compleat Gamester* (London: R. Cutler, 1674), 83, 86–87.

¹⁵ Molière, *Œuvres complètes* (see note 12), 1:167.

from reality, so circumscribed within what Johan Huizinga famously termed the “act apart” of games and play.¹⁶

While he may initially appear irrational, in some ways Alcipe is a child of the new era of probability. He is not simply upset that he has lost, but that his loss was so incredibly unlikely. As he exclaims to Éraste, “Morbleu fais-moi raison de ce coup effroyable. À moins que l’avoir vu, peut-il être croyable?” (Zounds, explain to me this astonishing event. Short of having seen it, could you believe it?).¹⁷ Éraste casually responds, “C’est dans le jeu, qu’on voit les plus grands coups du sort” (It is in games that we see the most extreme blows of Fate),¹⁸ anxious to dismiss Alcipe as soon as possible. But Éraste’s platitudinal response is telling and even somewhat dated. After all, Pascal and Fermat’s correspondence about the odds of endgame situations not unlike Alcipe’s was already seven years old. Christiaan Huygens’s textbook entitled precisely *De Ratiociniis in ludo aleae* (*Of Calculations in Games of Chance*) had come out in 1657. Games were in fact where chance was *most*, not least, predictable, and if Éraste could not or would not supply Alcipe with a satisfactory answer, a new generation of thinkers were prepared in groundbreaking ways to respond to the gambler’s request to render an account of what had happened.

In the conversation between Alcipe and Éraste, two attitudes toward chance – one old and one new – are confronting each other. For Éraste, there is nothing inherently surprising in Alcipe’s story, since chance is inscrutable and prone to “grands coups,” or surprising reversals. By referencing “le sort,” Éraste invokes a panoply of traditional European notions and terms that link the purportedly random to unknowable cosmic forces: luck, fate, or fortune. Reflecting this older view, Antoine Furetière, in his 1690 dictionary, mentions an etymology for the word *dé* (“die”) that derives it from *judicium Dei*, defined as “le jugement du sort, du hasard, de la Providence” (the judgment of fate, of chance, of Providence).¹⁹

Turning to a different array of metaphysical forces, Jean-Baptiste Thiers will insist in his 1685 *Traité des jeux* on the diabolical origin of games of chance, citing a multitude of ecclesiastical authorities to assert “ou que les jeux de hazard sont de l’invention du Démon, ou que ceux qui y jouent sacrifient au Démon”

¹⁶ On Huizinga’s insistence on the separate nature of play (both temporal and spatial), see Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (1938; Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 2014), 9–10.

¹⁷ Molière, *Œuvres complètes* (see note 12), 1:168.

¹⁸ Molière, *Œuvres complètes* (see note 12), 1:168.

¹⁹ Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, 3 vols. (The Hague and Rotterdam: Arnoud et Reinier Leers, 1690), n.p.

(either games of chance are the invention of the Demon, or those who play sacrifice to the Demon).²⁰ Similarly, Pierre de Joncourt in 1713 condemned games of chance by invoking the third commandment, prohibiting the vain use of the name of God. For Joncourt, the outcomes of all earthly events, even the most trivial, are overseen by the divine, and consequently God is obligated to determine the result of each roll of the dice. As Joncourt writes, “[Q]uand on s’en sert à jouer, & à déterminer la perte ou le gain d’un argent, qui étoit déjà tout partagé, on avilit honteusement *le Sort*, & l’on fait un indigne & criminel usage de cette decision de la Providence de Dieu” (When we use them to play and determine the loss or gain of money which was already shared out, we shamefully abase Fate and make an unworthy and criminal use of this decision of God’s Providence).²¹

Whether an appeal to heaven or a sacrifice to devils, chance invoked the divine – when human causality was removed, divine or diabolical agency rushed in to fill the causal vacuum left behind. Where such forces were concerned, it was useless for human rationality to try to predict the outcome, and as Éraсте states to Alcipe, the only thing to expect is the unexpected.

However, not all European gamblers who viewed chance as a supernatural force resigned themselves to submitting passively to its decisions. Thiers recounts an anecdote in his *Traité des jeux* of players who “avoient accoutumé pour gagner de mettre le nom de Jesus sur la table où ils jouoient aux dez, estimant que ce saint & redoutable nom seroit favorable à leur jeu” (had the habit of putting the name of Jesus on the table where they diced, figuring that this holy and redoubtable name would be favorable to their game).²² In his *Traité du jeu* (1709), Jean Barbeyrac notes the superstition characteristic of those who play games and writes that gamblers “tirent de bons ou de mauvais augures des moindres choses” (derive good or bad omens from the slightest things).²³ Through a flawed process of induction, gamblers arrive at their own metaphysical system designed to forecast eventualities or render supernatural forces favorable to them: “Ils prescrivent, pour ainsi dire, certaines Régles à la Fortune, qui, dans leur esprit, renferme toûjours une idée plus ou moins confuse de Providence” (They prescribe, so to say, certain rules to Fortune, which, in their

²⁰ Jean-Baptiste Thiers, *Traité des jeux et des divertissemens* (Paris: Antoine Dezallier, 1686), 171.

²¹ Pierre de Joncourt, *Quatre Lettres sur les jeux de hazard* (La Haye: T. Johnson, 1713), 87. See also Élisabeth Belmas, *Jouer autrefois: Essai sur le jeu dans la France moderne (XVIe – XVIIIe siècle)* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2006), 33–34.

²² Thiers, *Traité des jeux* (see note 20), 425.

²³ Jean Barbeyrac, *Traité du jeu*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Pierre Humbert, 1709), 1:311.

minds, always encompasses a more or less confused idea of Providence).²⁴ The authors of *La Logique* similarly attack the irrational notion of luck prevalent among gamblers:

Il semble que la fortune ait fait choix de nous, & qu'elle nous ait favorisés comme ayant égard à notre mérite. On conçoit même ce bonheur prétendu comme une qualité permanente, qui donne droit d'espérer à l'avenir le même succès.

[It seems that fortune has chosen us and that she has favored us, as if in regards to our merit. We even think of this supposed luck as a permanent quality that gives us the right to hope for the same success in the future.²⁵]

Describing what would later come to be called the gambler's fallacy, Arnauld and Nicole comment that the belief is "entièrement ridicule; car on peut bien dire qu'un homme a été heureux jusqu'à un certain moment; mais pour le moment suivant, il n'y a nulle probabilité plus grande qu'il le soit, que ceux qui ont été les plus malheureux" (entirely ridiculous, since one can certainly say that a man has been lucky up to a certain point, but that the following moment there is no greater likelihood that he will be than those who are most unlucky).²⁶ For the memoryless dice and cards, past successes or failures are no guarantee of future results.

None of these authors is claiming that divine powers do not exist, or that they could not intervene as they please in games of chance – in fact, all of these writers would unequivocally agree that God could foretell what the outcome of a game of chance would be. However, in many ways they are pursuing a common project, aiming to divest games of chance from the realm of the mystical and the irrational. God's providence may well still be in effect, but it has no need, in the minds of these writers, to intervene in cases governed by mechanistic and predictable forces, and it even verges on blasphemy to suggest otherwise, as Barbeyrac argues when he condemns gamblers for blaming heaven for their losses.²⁷

In many respects, then, the development of probability in early modern Europe can be seen as an extension of human rationality into a conceptual space that had hitherto largely been the purview of mystery and metaphysics. In the decades following Pascal and Fermat's breakthrough, many thinkers challenged the notion of chance as divine expression to posit instead a disenchanted, mech-

²⁴ Barbeyrac, *Traité du jeu* (see note 23), 1:311.

²⁵ Arnauld and Nicole, *La Logique* (see note 8), 115.

²⁶ Arnauld and Nicole, *La Logique* (see note 8), 115.

²⁷ Barbeyrac, *Traité du jeu* (see note 23), 1:309–11.

anistic world in which physical laws operated on their own, following the system that God had created. As a proponent of reason and natural law (in fact, his treatise on games contains a long argument that strives to prove that Christian morality and rational ethics are identical),²⁸ Barbeyrac advocated for a view of games that evaluated them according to their logical moral consequences and that saw randomizers like dice or cards functioning according to physical laws of motion, even if these were too complex and the measurements too minute to be calculated:

On ne sauroit donc condamner absolument les Jeux de Hazard, sur un fondement aussi foible, & du moins aussi douteux, que cette supposition d'un acte particulier de la Providence, qui conduise & distribuë les bons ou les mauvais coups. La vérité est, que ce sont les Joueurs eux-mêmes qui procurent l'événement, quoi que sans le savoir & sans le diriger par une volonté qui agisse avec connoissance & en suivant certaines Règles. Du moment qu'on a mêlé les Cartes ou remué les Dez, d'une certaine manière, il est aussi nécessaire & aussi inévitable qu'il en résulte une telle combinaison de Cartes ou un tel coup de Dé, qu'il est impossible qu'une Boule ne roule bien ou mal, & d'un tel sens, selon qu'on l'a poussée avec plus ou moins de force, & avec un certain tour de bras.

[One cannot condemn entirely games of chance on a basis so feeble and doubtful as this supposition that a particular act of Providence conducts and distributes the good or bad results. The truth is that it is the players themselves who produce this outcome, although without knowing it and without directing it through a will that acts with understanding, following certain rules. From the moment that one has shuffled the cards or shaken the dice in a certain manner, it is as necessary and also as inevitable that a certain combination of cards or a certain dice roll will result as it is impossible for a ball not to roll well or badly and in a given direction according to how much or little force one has pushed it with, or with what angle of the arms.²⁹]

Barbeyrac's statement here confirms Gerda Reith's observation that early modern probability was epistemological, not ontological.³⁰ The random is simply something that surpasses human beings' ability to predict, but which would be perfectly explicable through physical laws if all information were available.³¹

Of course, the development of probability mathematics did not completely supplant the older view – as Reith reminds us, modern gamblers, fully aware

²⁸ Barbeyrac, *Traité du jeu* (see note 23), 1:32–37.

²⁹ Barbeyrac, *Traité du jeu* (see note 23), 1:29.

³⁰ Reith, *The Age of Chance* (see note 2), 10, 13.

³¹ The fullest expression of this will come in 1814 with Pierre-Simon Laplace's thought experiment about an intelligence (Laplace's "demon") armed with such a knowledge of physical laws that "rien ne serait incertain pour elle, et l'avenir comme le passé, serait présent à ses yeux" (nothing would be uncertain for it, and the future like the past would be present to its eyes) (*Essai philosophique sur les probabilités*, sixth ed. [1814; Paris: Bachelier, 1840], 3).

of the odds, often still invoke notions of luck, gut feelings, or providence.³² Rather, it created a newly possible distinction in approaches to gambling: the former irrational (or supra- or even perhaps anti-rational) approach and the method of the new technicians of play, armed with their own calculations or those done by others – two such instances of this proliferating genre were the calculation of dice odds for the game Hazzard in Charles Cotton's 1674 *Compleat Gamester* and the mathematical study of the game *bassette* that appeared in 1679 in the premier French intellectual periodical, the *Journal des Savants*.³³

Alcipe anticipates these developments, approaching his game through strategy and reason, and expressing surprise at his unlikely loss. He insists to Éraste that he played correctly, in the most rational way possible, even pulling out cards to show his and his opponent's hands and telling Éraste, "Parbleu tu jugeras, toi-même, si j'ai tort; / Et si c'est sans raison, que ce coup me transporte" (By Jove, you will judge yourself if I'm wrong, and if it's without cause that this blow enrages me).³⁴ While Alcipe does not invoke any mathematical calculations, he is certainly dealing with a notion of likelihood and also never echoes Éraste's supernatural (even if figurative) language of fate or fortune. In a revealing final exclamation, Alcipe says that this event is "pour ma raison, pis qu'un coup de tonnerre" (for my reason, worse than a thunderbolt),³⁵ his rational method overthrown by this unforeseen stroke of bad luck. Éraste may well dub Alcipe a fool as the gambler leaves the stage, but Alcipe represents an early example of the new kind of player, attempting to mitigate chance through strategy, rationality, and calculation. It was for a later generation of Alcipes that Edmond Hoyle would write *A Short Treatise on the Game of Piquet* in 1744, including ready calculations that gave the odds for a wide variety of game situations. In response to the gambler's "fais-moi raison" (explain to me), the nascent field of probability would one day be able to tell Alcipe just how unlikely his loss was. As Christiaan Huygens states in the introductory lines of *De Ratiociniis in ludo aleae*, "Et si lusionum, quas sola sors moderator incerti solent esse eventus, attamen in his, quanto quis ad vincendum quam perdendum propior sit, certam semper habet determinationem" (And if the outcome of games that depend entirely on chance

32 Reith cites "a broad range of magical and quasi-religious beliefs" including luck, fate, and destiny, noting, "Thoughts banished from the outside world as superstitious and irrational are here given credence and provide a framework which organise and explain the vagaries of play and the outcome of games" (*The Age of Chance* [see note 2], 156).

33 Cotton, *The Compleat Gamester* (see note 14), 171, and Joseph Sauveur, "Supputation des avantages du banquier dans le Jeu de la Bassete," *Journal des Sçavans* (février 1679): 38–45.

34 Molière, *Œuvres complètes* (see note 12), 1:168.

35 Molière, *Œuvres complètes* (see note 12), 1:168.

is uncertain, yet how more likely winning or losing is can always be exactly determined).³⁶ Even if chance or fate was the ultimate determining factor in a game of *piquet*, it was now possible to measure likeliness with exactness.

However, in the controlled universe of Molière's play, Alcipe loses in the most unlikely of ways, the outcome determined by the playwright for comic effect. In that regard, Alcipe's efforts to mitigate chance were doomed to failure from the start, since the result was never going to be due to chance. As he leaves the stage, Alcipe mutters out loud the decisive moment of the game: "Un six de cœur! deux points!" (A six of hearts! Two points!) while Éraste in an aside dubs him a fool ("De quelque part qu'on tourne, on ne voit que des fous" [Wherever you turn, you see only fools]).³⁷

It would fall to another play, Jean-François Regnard's *Le Joueur* (1696), more than thirty years later to show the triumph of the rational, those who controlled chance through calculation and strategy, although ironically this group would not include Regnard's titular gambler. Many plays involving gambling appear between Molière's *Les Fâcheux* and Regnard's play, but *Le Joueur* is an important milestone in the evolving French theatrical treatment of the staged gambler, since it represents the first time that a five-act play centers itself around a main character whose defining feature is gaming.³⁸

That main character is Valère, the wastrel son of the wealthy Géronte. Géronte would like nothing better than to see his son settle down, marry well, and take up the responsibilities of sober adult life. Valère, however, is addicted to *tric-trac*, a game in the backgammon family, and his interest in Angélique, the match that his father has intended for him, varies inversely according to his gambling fortunes, as Valère's servant Hector points out:

Votre bourse est, Monsieur, puisqu'il faut vous le dire,
Un Thermomètre sûr, tantôt bas, tantôt haut,
Marquant de votre cœur ou le froid, ou le chaud.

36 Christiaan Huygens, "De Ratiociniis in ludo aleae," in Frans van Schooten, *Exercitationum Mathematicarum*, (Leiden: Elsevir, 1657), 521.

37 Molière, *Œuvres complètes* (see note 12), 1:168.

38 Following *Les Fâcheux* and before Regnard's *Le Joueur*, other notable plays involving gambling and gamblers include La Forge's *La Joueuse dupée* (1664), Poisson's *Les Femmes coquettes* (1671), and Dancourt's *La Désolation des joueuses* (1687). The first and third of these plays are light one-act entertainments; while Poisson's play in five acts includes gambling among its concerns, it merely forms part of the general dissolution of the main characters.

[Your wallet is, sir, since it is necessary to tell you,
A reliable thermometer, sometimes high, sometimes low,
Indicating the heat or the cold of your heart.³⁹]

In contrast to his contemporaries whose work on probability was disenchanting chance, Valère attributes magical properties to gambling. In Valère's paean to the gambler's life in Act Three, the gambler becomes endowed with the ability to bring abundance and happiness everywhere he goes, producing riches and objects of leisure out of nothing, and alchemically transmuting the base into the splendid:

Hector en vérité,
Il n'est point dans le monde un état plus aimable,
Que celui d'un Joueur, sa vie est agréable,
Ses jours sont enchaînés par des plaisirs nouveaux,
Comédie, Opéra, bonne chère, cadeaux,
Il traîne en tous les lieux la joie et l'abondance,
On voit régner sur lui l'air de magnificence;
Tabatières, bijoux, sa poche est un trésor,
Sous ses heureuses mains le cuivre devient or.

[Hector, truly
There isn't in the world a state more lovely
Than that of a gambler. His life is pleasing,
His days are connected by new pleasures,
Comedy, opera, good cheer, gifts.
He brings with him everywhere joy and abundance,
He radiates an aura of magnificence.
Snuffboxes, jewels, his pocket is a treasury,
Under his lucky hands copper becomes gold.⁴⁰]

If the gambler is a magical figure for Valère, that is because he views gambling as an essentially irrational activity, its course determined not by natural laws, but by cosmic forces such as destiny and fate. Valère's statements before or after playing are in this regard particularly revealing. When the reader first encounters him, Valère is despondent over a recent gambling loss, stating, "Tu peux me faire perdre, ô fortune ennemi! / Mais me faire payer, parbleu je t'en défie, / Car je n'ai pas un sou" (You can make me lose, oh Fortune, my enemy, but to make me pay,

³⁹ Jean-François Regnard, *Théâtre français*, 3 vols. (Paris: Garnier, 2015), 1:258. All Regnard quotations are from this edition.

⁴⁰ Regnard, *Théâtre français* (see note 39), 1:312.

I defy you, since I don't have a penny).⁴¹ Later, as he heads out to play the disastrous game that will lead to his final rupture with Angélique, Valère announces to his servant Hector, "J'ai dans le cœur, Hector, un bon pressentiment, / Et je dois aujourd'hui gagner, assurément" (I've got a good feeling in my heart, Hector and I'm certainly going to win today), and further boasts that such hunches have served him well in the past.⁴² When he loses, he once again apostrophizes "le sort," exclaiming, "Et tu ne me flattais que pour mieux m'étouffer" (You only flattered me the better to strangle me).⁴³ Although *tric-trac* is a game that relies on equal measures of chance and strategy, Valère's own descriptions of his gambling have little to do with rational planning and connect his wins or losses to feelings and forces beyond his control.

Although it is 1696, for Valère it might as well be 1646 – he approaches gambling as if he were a pitifully displaced tragic hero, opposing valorous fortitude to contrary fate. In Act Four, Valère's servant Hector returns to the lodgings to get more money, since his master is currently playing and losing. In his expressive description of the gambling to Angélique, Hector draws upon martial terms to depict Valère's actions:

On le peut voir encore sur le champ de bataille,
Il frappe à droite à gauche et d'estoc et de taille :
Il se défend, Madame, encor comme un lion,
Je l'ai vu dans l'effort de la convulsion,
Maudissant les hasards d'un combat trop funeste,
De sa bourse expirante il ramassait le reste;
Et paraissant encor plus grand dans son malheur,
Il vendait cher son sang et sa vie au vainqueur.

[You can still see him on the field of battle,
Striking to the right and left, stabbing and swinging.
He defends himself, Madame, like a lion.
I saw him in convulsive efforts
Cursing the fortunes of a sinister combat.
He rallied the remnants of his expiring wallet
And, appearing even grander in the midst of his misfortune,
He sold his life and blood dearly to the victor.⁴⁴]

⁴¹ Regnard, *Théâtre français* (see note 39), 1:254.

⁴² Regnard, *Théâtre français* (see note 39), 1:328.

⁴³ Regnard, *Théâtre français* (see note 39), 1:345.

⁴⁴ Regnard, *Théâtre français* (see note 39), 1:334. Kavanagh notes, "In the world of Regnard's gambler, it is the deployment of game pieces that confers an identity that was once the prerogative of birth and military valor" (*Dice, Cards, Wheels* [see note 1], 118).

Describing himself as an “Aide de Camp” sent back to bring to the front Valère’s “corps de réserve” (his last remaining money), Hector limns Valère’s gambling in comically valorous language that parodies the diction of tragedy.⁴⁵ Valère himself (without Hector’s sense of irony) adopts the same heroic register when a few scenes later he describes his gambling losses:

Non l’Enfer en courroux et toutes ses furies
N’ont jamais exercé de telles barbaries,
Je te loue ô destin! de tes coups redoublés,
Je n’ai rien à perdre, et tes vœux sont comblés;
Pour assouvir encor la fureur qui t’anime,
Tu ne peux rien sur moi, cherche une autre victime.

[No, Hell in anger and all its Furies
Have never wreaked such barbarous actions.
I praise you, O Destiny!
I have nothing left to fear from your renewed attacks and your wishes are fulfilled.
To sate the anger that you have against me
There’s nothing more you can do. Find another victim.⁴⁶]

Such language sets up an interesting comparison with Alcipe, Molière’s unfortunate gambler in *Les Fâcheux*. While Alcipe’s exaggerated despair over the outcome of his game echoes that of Valère, Alcipe’s focus is on how unlikely his loss is, as he makes clear in his insistence on describing to Éraste the game state and his decision process. It is Éraste, not Alcipe, who describes the event in terms of “le sort.” By contrast, Valère’s loss provokes a wild address to *le destin*, conceptualizing his gambling fortunes as an impossible struggle against larger cosmic forces. While such an attitude would have been typical in an earlier generation (or in the archaizing genre of tragedy), Valère’s stance seems strangely and comically out of place.

Indeed, Valère’s attitude toward gambling ignores or rejects that recent decades had produced other ways of playing and profiting from games of chance. In August 1695, for example, just a year before the premiere of Regnard’s play, the fashionable periodical *Le Mercure galant* published a sixty-page guide to *tric-trac* entitled “Lettre qui explique le jeu du Trictrac, avec des remarques & des reflections, & toutes les loix de ce jeu” (Letter which explains the game of

⁴⁵ Hector’s name in the play functions similarly in this respect, connecting the worlds of literary heroism with gambling. Originally named Richard, he has been renamed by his master in honor of the jack of diamonds, whose popular nickname is that of the Trojan hero. See Regnard, *Théâtre français* (see note 39), 1:306, and also Kavanagh, *Dice, Cards, Wheels* (see note 1), 118.

⁴⁶ Regnard, *Théâtre français* (see note 39), 1:345.

Tric-Trac, with remarks, reflections, and all the rules of this game). In this letter, while exhaustively explaining the various rules and strategies, the author claims, “Celuy qui jouë dans l’ordre & selon la regle, merite d’avoir le dé favorable, & de gagner. Aussi a-t-il plus de coups à esperer pour luy, & à la longue il aura infailiblement l’avantage” (He who plays in an orderly fashion and according to strategy deserves to have a favorable die and to win. Also, he has more chances on his side, and in the end, he will infallibly have the advantage).⁴⁷ Appealing to the law of large numbers, the author states that while individual results may certainly vary, following the best strategies will mean that over the long run, the rational player will win out.

However, we do not need to look even outside of the play to find other approaches to gambling in general, and *tric-trac* in particular. As if to reinforce the old-fashioned overtones of Valère’s appeals to Fortune and fate, Regnard’s play introduces at the end of the first act a M. Toutabas who identifies himself to Valère’s father, Géronte, as a “Docteur dans tous les jeux, et Maître de Trictrac” (Doctor of all games and Master of Tric-Trac).⁴⁸ When Géronte mockingly calls him “Monsieur le Professeur” and says that he should be locked up in an insane asylum, Toutabas ripostes by mocking the uselessness of many aristocratic pastimes and vaunts the clear benefits of his teaching:

Ne vaut-il pas bien mieux qu’un jeune Cavalier
 Dans mon Art au plus tôt se fasse initier?
 Qu’il sache, quand il perd, d’une âme non commune,
 À force de savoir rappeler la fortune?
 Qu’il apprenne un métier qui par de sûrs secrets
 En le divertissant l’enrichisse à jamais.

[Isn’t it more worth it that a young well-off person
 Become acquainted with my art as soon as possible?
 That he learn, when he is losing,
 How to bring back fortune through knowledge?
 That he learn a trade that, through sure secrets,
 Will, while he is entertaining himself, make him rich forever?⁴⁹]

According to Toutabas, adverse Fortune can be reversed through “savoir,” the special knowledge that he is promising to teach for a fee. Granted, Toutabas’s course of instruction is not a primer in probability math – it mainly involves

⁴⁷ *Le Mercure galant* (août 1695): 133–34.

⁴⁸ Regnard, *Théâtre français* (see note 39), 1:268.

⁴⁹ Regnard, *Théâtre français* (see note 39), 1:269.

sleight of hand and loaded dice.⁵⁰ However, like probability, it aims to demystify gambling, transforming it from a yielding to the whims of chance to a process that is predictable and controlled. As Toutabas promises Géronte, “En suivant mes leçons on court peu ce hasard” (By following my lessons, you don’t run much of a risk).⁵¹ Toutabas claims that he can effectively transform games of chance into games of skill, or to use Roger Cailliois’s terms, games of *alea* into games of *agon*.⁵²

More importantly, when Géronte presses Toutabas regarding the negative social impact of gambling, the cheat catalogs a variety of people in modern Paris for whom gambling provides a steady livelihood, including usurers and women who run gambling establishments, charging fees to the players. These are the most rational players of all, whose approach to the gambling mania guarantees that they run little risk as they profit. Regnard stages one of these individuals later in the play in the person of Madame La Ressource, a usurer and pawnbroker who loans Valère ready money in exchange for the bejeweled portrait that Angélique has entrusted to her suitor. When this revealed economic transaction provokes the final split between the two would-be lovers, Madame La Ressource insists, “De tous vos débats, moi, je ne suis point la cause, / Et je prétends avoir mon Portrait, s’il vous plaît” (I’m not the cause of all your arguments, and I would like the portrait back, if you please).⁵³ Dorante, the successful rival of Valère, reassures the usurer that he will pay the full price for it and the interest as well. Madame La Ressource knows how to come out a winner at this particular game.

In the thirty years that separate Molière’s and Regnard’s plays, gambling on stage has taken on a new valence, not yet the full moral opprobrium that will come in the following century with Edward Moore’s *The Gamester* or Saurin’s French adaptation of it, but one in which the calculation of chance plays a significant role.⁵⁴ Regnard’s gambler is meant to serve as an example of the dangers involved in maintaining an irrational, almost mystical approach to a practice

50 Granted, the line between legitimate strategy and outright cheating was sometimes blurred. The Marquis in the third scene of La Forge’s *La Joueuse dupée* describes a game of *tric-trac* he has recently won using a mix of solid strategy and loaded dice. See La Forge, *La Joueuse dupée* in *Les Contemporains de Molière: Recueil de comédies, rares ou peu connues jouées de 1650 à 1680*, ed. Victor Fournel, 3 vols. (1865; Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1967), 3:299.

51 Regnard, *Théâtre français* (see note 39), 1:270.

52 See Roger Cailliois, *Les Jeux et les hommes: Le Masque et le vertige* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), 50–60.

53 Regnard, *Théâtre français* (see note 39), 1:369.

54 For a discussion of Moore, Saurin, and the anti-gambling moralizing of the late eighteenth century, see Kavanagh, *Dice, Cards, Wheels* (see note 1), 123–31.

that is increasingly characterized by calculation and control. Valère ends up broke, disinherited by his father, and abandoned by his fiancée. He has been thoroughly outplayed by his rival, Dorante, by usurers like Mme La Ressource, and potentially by cheating opponents who imitate Toutabas. Valère's final words, though, show that he has really learned nothing: "Va, va, consolons-nous, Hector, et quelque jour, / Le jeu m'acquittera des pertes de l'amour" (Let's console ourselves, Hector, and one day, gambling will repay me for love's losses).⁵⁵ Instead of the Senecan philosophy that he read earlier in the play to comfort himself after his losses, Valère might do better to pull out *La Logique* and brush up on the idea of mathematical expectation.

To Molière's audience, at the dawn of the age of probability, Alcipe seemed humorously ridiculous, frustrated at the outcome of a game of chance and pretending to be able to control the essentially uncontrollable. Thirty years later, something has changed. The audience still laughs at the frustrated gambler, but Regnard's Valère is ridiculous not for his failed pretensions to control chance, but because of his continued insistence to see gambling in the irrational terms of fortune and fate, despite the mounting evidence that the real winners in the Parisian gambling scene are the moneylenders, the owners of the gaming dens, the cheats, and other rational players whose income is based on solid calculations of interest and risk. To gamble in 1696, unlike in 1661, is willfully to reenchant a world that was being progressively secularized by probability. Valère may invoke fate, chance, and destiny, but those words now sound hopelessly naïve. It is to play a game that has become rigged. No longer where we expect the unexpected, gambling in Regnard's play proceeds instead with the certainty of a mathematical demonstration until its conclusion, no more surprising than the result from a roll of loaded dice.

55 Regnard, *Théâtre français* (see note 39), 1:373.

Thomas Willard

“His usuall Retyrement”: Henry Vaughan’s Life and Writing during the English Civil War

For young men in England, the decade of civil warfare from 1642 to 1651 meant profound changes in the lives they were to live. Families were forced to take sides in the conflict between King Charles I and Parliament. Some families were divided, brother against brother – or brother against brother-in-law and twin against twin, as was dramatized in the television series “By the Sword Divided.”¹ Other families fled the country, leaving only a few members and retainers behind them. The casualties of war were high, with premature deaths in almost every family.² Even in those that did not send their sons to war, or allow them to fight, there were profound changes. Old jobs and activities became untenable, and new ones were available to younger members, sometimes forced upon them. Some marriages were postponed, while others were cut short. Property taxes soared, as did food prices. The whole of England suffered, and so did the neighboring country of Wales, which had been united with England for a century.

This essay will follow the life of Henry Vaughan (1621–1695), a member of the Welsh gentry who grew up in the border county of Breconshire. He experienced firsthand the disruptions associated with civil war, which affected both his duties as eldest son and his leisure activities. Thirty years after the war had begun, he wrote to his “Honoured Cousin” John Aubrey (1626–1697), who had sought biographical information on Vaughan and his twin brother Thomas (1621–1666). Because Aubrey was collecting the information for a volume about famous Oxonians, Vaughan felt obliged to report: “I stayed not att Oxford to take any degree, but was sent to London, beinge then designed by my father for the

1 “By the Sword Divided,” BBC television, 20 episodes, 1983–1985; available on DVD (Acorn) and streaming video (YouTube). The series was created by John Hawkesworth as the sequel to his popular “Upstairs Downstairs.”

2 An estimated 100,000 soldiers and civilians died during the wars of 1642–1651, a larger percentage of the population than died during the Great War of 1914–1918. See Peter Ackroyd, *Rebellion: The History of England from James I to the Glorious Revolution* (London: Macmillan; New York: Saint Martin’s Griffin, 2014), 302.

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study of the Law, w^{ch} [sic] the sudden eruption of our late civil warres wholie frustrated.”³ Vaughan’s father was the second son in a long-established family of Breconshire, the Vaughans of Tretower Court, and was fortunate enough to have married the young, childless widow of a wealthy farm owner in the area. His “design” for his oldest son was probably to have an heir who could defend the property against claims that might arise in a highly litigious society. The son may have envied his twin when he wrote: “my brother continued there [in Oxford] for ten or 12 years and (I thinke) he could be noe lesse than M^r of Arts.” Thomas may have been allowed to stay at Oxford because, as the second born, he was destined to become vicar of the parish church near the farm, which the family controlled, and the benefactor of profits from the adjacent glebe.⁴ The twins seem to have been close in their interests. An Oxford friend writing about them stated: “Not only your *faces*, but your *wits* are *Twins*” (36).

When Vaughan wrote of “civil warres,” he was being precise, for there were three wars within what is commonly called the English Civil War. The first and longest was between forces loyal to Charles I and to Parliament. It ran from 1642 to 1646 and led to the king’s defeat. The second, from 1648 to 1649, led not only to the king’s defeat but to his trial and execution. The third, from 1650 to 1651, pitted his son and successor, Charles II, against the forces of Parliament and again ended in the King’s defeat and exile on the Continent. When Vaughan wrote that his legal studies were “wholie frustrated” by the civil wars, he surely knew that his cousin had experienced considerable frustration himself on being called home from Oxford as the first war heated up. “My father’s caution has prevailed,” Aubrey wrote in his diary after he was back on the family farm in Wiltshire:

I am come home again to a sad country life. ... Here I converse with none but servants and rustics and quartered soldiers, to my great grief. Horace’s Odes come to mind: *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo* [“I hate the profane rabble and steer clear of them”]. I am scarcely acquainted with my father. I am in the prime of my youth and I am without the benefit of ingenious conversation, and have hardly any books.⁵

3 Henry Vaughan, *The Works of Henry Vaughan*, ed. L. C. Martin, 2nd ed. (1914; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 687–89; here 687; letter dated June 15, 1673. Further references to Vaughan’s writing are taken from this edition and appear (in parentheses) in the body of the text.

4 Biographical details about Vaughan are taken mainly from F. E. Hutchinson, *Henry Vaughan: A Life and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1947).

5 Ruth Schurr, *John Aubrey: My Own Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2015), 31; quoting Horace, *Ode* 3, line 1; modern texts read “vulgus.” For a good account of “the educated reader” at the time, see John R. Mulder, *The Temple of the Mind: Education and Literary Taste in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Pegasus, 1969), 13–41.

Vaughan's main opportunity to have the "ingenious conversation" and receive the new books associated with leisure reading was during Oxford's long summer vacation, when his brother could travel a distance more than double that between Oxford and London. Beyond that, he was largely thrown back to his college studies, which were primarily in the *literarum humaniorum* or humane letters. He seems to have had few close friends in Wales, though a couple of them will be mentioned later. Perhaps he could have said with his brother that he preferred his own company, "my *Nature* being more *Melancholy*, then *Sociable*."⁶ Aubrey wrote of Vaughan that he was "ingeniose but prowd and humorous," that was to say, clever but proud and melancholy or, at least, moody.⁷

Before the decade of civil warfare was over, Vaughan had become known in his neighborhood as a family doctor and in the literate world as a poet and translator. These identities had probably not been planned when he matriculated at Oxford in 1638, four years before the outbreak of war. He probably turned to medicine of necessity, as a learned profession that he could practice without a license in the countryside; and although he was already writing verse in Latin and English, his model was coterie poetry like that written by the "sons" of Ben Jonson and the "tribe" of John Donne – not the devotional poetry beloved by his readers in later generations. His new identities evolved in response to the social, religious, and political upheavals of the 1640s, which challenged such traditional distinctions as those between public and private life, between town and country life, and between active and contemplative or secular and sacred life – each pair of which had its distinctions between duties and leisure activities. As noted earlier, these upheavals affected a whole generation. Many studies of seventeenth-century writers have touched on Vaughan in relation to his contemporaries. This essay will focus on the single writer and his evolving sense of duty and leisure.

1 Leisure and Duty in Early Modern England

Before the civil wars, pastimes in England and the Welsh border counties were closely regulated – by parents and schoolmasters, by local lords and officials, and by laws and statutes, civil and religious. The notion of a "merry England,"

⁶ *The Fame and Confession of the R: C: Commonly, of the Rosie Cross*, ed. with preface and postscript by Thomas Vaughan (London: Giles Calvert, 1652), 57.

⁷ *Aubrey's Brief Lives* (1949; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1961), 463. Aubrey notes that Vaughan's paternal "grandmother was an Aubrey."

famously debunked by the academic hero of Kingsley Amis's novel *Lucky Jim*,⁸ has a historical background nevertheless, with a ritual calendar of festivals dating back to the Middle Ages.⁹ Such activities were subject to repeated attack by social reformers of all sorts. A general diatribe of 1583 listed a variety of "abuses" practiced on the Sabbath: "piping, dancing, dicing, card playing, bowling, tennis playing, bear-bating, cock-fighting, hawking, hunting," and others such as "football playing" and the "reading of lascivious and wanton books."¹⁰ Some pastimes were associated with a certain social class – hawking and hunting with the aristocracy, for example, bear-baiting and cock-fighting with the peasantry.¹¹ Horseback riding was as common then, of course, as automobile driving today; however, the wealthier had tournaments with their best steeds,¹² while the poorer had only working horses. Children of all classes had their games, such as leap-frog, mentioned by Shakespeare, and blind-man's-buff. More elaborate games like skittles and billiards, also mentioned by Shakespeare, required frames and pins or tables and balls found only in public houses or a lord's manor.¹³ Betting on winners was common among people of all classes.

Vaughan came from the social stratum that might be called upper-middle class by today's standard. His family belonged to the gentry, and he proudly signed his first volume of verse "*Henry Vaughan, Gent.*" The gentry were well

8 Kingsley Amis, *Lucky Jim* (London: Victor Gollancz; New York: Doubleday, 1954). Also see "Merry England, noun," OED Online, June 2018, Oxford University Press, www.oed.com (last accessed on Aug. 14, 2018).

9 Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year, 1400–1700* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). Hutton's terminal date follows forty years after the end of the English Revolution and fifteen after the death of the "merry monarch" Charles II. (The epithet was applied to Charles by the later-disgraced courtier John Wiltot, the second Earl of Rochester.)

10 Phillip Stubbes, *An Anatomie of Abuses* (London: Richard Jones, 1583), 85; spelling modernized. Also see Joseph Strutt, *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (1801; Detroit: Singing Tree Press, 1968). The four books of this classic study cover activities of the aristocracy and of the general public, as well as pastimes peculiar to large communities and to specific times of year.

11 For information on the differentiation of leisure activities by social class throughout the Renaissance, see Alesandro Archangeli, *Recreation in the Renaissance: Attitudes Toward Leisure and Pastime in European Culture, c. 1425–1675* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 89–93.

12 On the aristocratic fondness for tournaments and pageants of re-enacted warfare, see the essay by Marilyn Sandidge in this volume.

13 William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 5.2.137 and *Antony and Cleopatra*, 2.5.3. Other popular games in taverns included tables, a form of chess, and merrils or nine-men's morris, on which see the contribution to this volume by Kevin and Brent Moberly.

below the aristocracy, yet above the yeoman farmers who owned property but often lacked anything like a family tree such as the Vaughans had, dating back more than two centuries. The gentry also had more social standing than the merchants with whom they dealt, though they could become hard pressed financially. The social order was in flux, during the rapid inflation that followed the surge of gold from Spanish possessions in the New World as well as fluctuating food prices associated with crop failures.¹⁴ As was happening throughout Europe, some members of each class were gaining wealth and power, while others were losing one or both. There were no clear divides in the Civil War. While the aristocracy and gentry tended to side with the king, and the merchants and peasants with parliament, many simply wanted peace. Divisions within families were often occasioned by religious differences and positions in the birth order.¹⁵

Vaughan's father seems to have been something of a ne'er-do-well. Aubrey noted that he was "a coxcombe and no honester than he should be," adding "he cosened [cheated] me of 50s. once."¹⁶ He apparently did little community service; however, he served at least once as a church warden and also served one time each as justice of the peace under his brother and under-sheriff assisting a cousin. Vaughan's biographer refers to the elder Vaughan's "generally imppecunious condition ... typical of the small gentry of Wales." He comments on the small value assessed on the property that he owned at his death in 1658, but notes that land and goods inherited by his widow may not have been taken into account.¹⁷ There is no sporting or gaming equipment in the inventory and no reading material either, though books in the house's "study" were surely claimed by the son.

As sides in the Civil War were chosen, class was but one of many issues. The aristocracy, which owed their titles to the king or his predecessors, naturally banded with him. The gentry and yeomen tended to stay with their betters in the north and west of England, where the new cash economy had not fully reached and thus with remnants of the old feudal economy, while their social counterparts tended to side with Parliament in the south and east. Peasants, when they revolted, did so as they had in the Middle Ages, demanding access to lands belonging to the state as well as those left idle and sometimes enclosed by wealthy landowners. Religious preference also played a role. Those who be-

¹⁴ Maurice Ashley, *The English Civil War*, revised ed. (1974; London: Thames & Hudson, 1990), 2–8.

¹⁵ Such family differences were dramatized in the BBC television series "By the Sword Divided" (see note 1).

¹⁶ Aubrey's *Brief Lives* (see note 7), 463.

¹⁷ Hutchinson, *Henry Vaughan* (see note 4), 18–20.

longed to the established Church of England were loyal to the King and so were Roman Catholics, for Charles I had married a Catholic and had not moved to persecute Catholics. Meanwhile, Protestants with puritanical leanings were more likely to side with Parliament, even if they belonged to the aristocracy; however, religion was too small a factor to support the term “Protestant Revolution,” which was not introduced until a later century and has depended on Max Weber’s “protestant work ethic” and “capitalist spirit” – terms Weber found more applicable to the American colonies than to England itself.¹⁸ For some the choosing of sides was a referendum on the Stuart dynasty and on Charles I in particular. Unable or unwilling to compromise with Parliament, he had embarked on what has been called “an experiment in absolute monarchy.”¹⁹ After starting wars in Scotland and Ireland, he imposed heavy taxes on landowners to pay for them. In a creative manoeuvre, he granted monopoly rights to businesses like soap-makers that agreed to pay high annual taxes, while imposing stiff fines on rivals that ignored the monopoly.

To casual observers, the most obvious difference between men who followed the one cause or the other was in the cut of their hair. Royalists tended to have hair that was long, flowing, and often curled in the fashion of King Charles, while many parliamentarians kept theirs short. They became known to their adversaries as Cavaliers and Roundheads, respectively. Because these were character types only, based on generalization and verging on caricature, they tended to focus on the social extremes – the royal family and their close relations, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the former apprentices and farmhands who formed the core of Oliver Cromwell’s New Model Army. Only if one concentrates on these extremes do we have a real parallel to Thorsten Veblen’s leisure class and working class, which he traced back to the beginnings of individual ownership.²⁰

Veblen associated the leisure class of his own time with what he called “conspicuous consumption.” Some trappings of royalist officers, such as the large feathers in their caps and the clothes made after French and Italian fashions, were especially conspicuous in paintings of warfare, where the personal state-

18 Max Weber, *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons, introd. Anthony Giddens (1904; London: Routledge, 2001).

19 Ackroyd, *Rebellion* (see note 2), 149.

20 Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1899). The difficulty of associating either side in the Civil Wars with a leisured class are discussed in Diane Purkiss, *Literature, Gender, and Politics during the English Civil War* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 78–79 and 131–32.

ment seems more important than personal safety. (Of course, these were not painted on the battlefield but in the studio.) Higher education was another sign of wealth, though students from poorer families were admitted to universities as “servitors” in the equivalent of modern “work-study” programs. Oxford, where Vaughan spent a year or two, was strongly royalist, while Cambridge attracted students with parliamentary leanings, including the poet John Milton. Even more than a university education, the Grand Tour of western Europe, especially France and Italy, was a mark of family wealth, enjoyed by young men on both sides of the political debate.²¹ John Milton (1608–1674), a parliamentarian, raced back to England at the outbreak of civil warfare, while the poet Abraham Cowley (1618–1667), who was ejected from a fellowship at Cambridge for his royalist views, followed Queen Henrietta to France, where he stayed for a dozen years.

What the culture wars in seventeenth-century England said for our topic of leisure and pleasure comes out most clearly in two contrasting documents published during the decade before the Civil War. In 1632, a London lawyer named William Prynne (1600–1669) issued a tract denouncing plays and “stage players,” both of which he condemned as “sinful, heathenish, lewde, and ungodly.”²² The following year, at the urging of Archbishop William Laud (1573–1645), the king reissued the *Book of Sport*, originally prepared by his father, James I, fifteen years earlier.²³ The book greatly expanded the list of “lawful recreation” permitted on Sundays. Writing in the first person, the king approved activities “such as dancing, either men or women; archery for men, leaping, vaulting, or any other such harmless recreation, ... May-games, Whitsun-ales, and Morris-dances; and the setting up of May-poles.” However, he “still prohibited ... bear and bull-baiting, interludes and ... bowling.”²⁴ Here is a list of leisure activities popular in England, especially in rural districts, including many that Stubbes denounced fifty years earlier. The “interludes” were traditionally dramatic farces, such as once used between acts of medieval mystery plays; they were still allowed on other days of the week. The sides were clearly drawn. Prynne’s denunciation of the “whores” on the public stage was taken, no

²¹ See Edward Changy, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Relations since the Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1998); the first twelve chapters focus on the early modern period. Also see the introduction to this volume.

²² William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix: The Players Scourge or, Actors Tragedie* (1632; London: Michael Sparke, 1633). The adjectives quoted appear on the title page.

²³ *The Book of Sports, as Set Forth by King Charles the I.* (London: J. Baker, 1633).

²⁴ Constitution Society, “The Declaration of Sports,” <http://www.constitution.org/eng/> (last accessed on Aug. 31, 2018).

doubt wrongly, as an attack on the King's wife, who had starred in a popular play at court.²⁵ This may account for the severity of the judgement against Prynne, which included the loss of his ears as well as his license to practice law. His admittedly puritanical sentiments led to the closing of public theaters, by act of parliament, shortly after the first civil war began.

Historians of the *Annales* school in France have shown that growing literacy in northern Europe tended to blur social boundaries.²⁶ In England, the Protestant Reformation promoted the reading of Scripture in English translation and, with it, the rise of literacy to levels not reached again until the education acts of the nineteenth century. Once people could read, they could choose their reading material, including the popular broadsides and the first newspapers as well as the early fictions known as romances. Of course, some of this seemed "lascivious," as Stubbes had complained. However, boys being prepared for higher education had cultural values beaten into them along with their Latin grammar, including the difference between pleasure and duty.

In the days when grammar schooling meant learning to write and speak Latin first and foremost, students were taught the virtue of honest leisure (*otium honestum*), which was characterized by dignity (*dignitas*) rather than mere pleasure (*voluptas*). Their source, perhaps the most frequently used of all classical texts, was Cicero's late treatise *De Officiis* ("Of Duties"), which they knew as "Tully's Offices."²⁷ When he wrote this small book for his son Marcus not long before his own death, Cicero (106–43 B.C.E.) offered advice on achieving honor in life even during the uneasy transition from the Roman Republic he loved and served to the Roman Empire created thirteen years after his death. Toward the end, he revealed his own ideal in the Roman general Scipio Africanus (236–183 B.C.E.), who claimed that "he was never less idle than when he had nothing to do, and never less lonely than when he was by himself." Cicero ex-

25 W[alter] Montague, *The Shepheard's Paradise: a Comedy Privately Acted before the Late King Char[le]s, by the Queen's Majesty, and Ladies of the Court* (London: John Starkey, 1659). The *dramatis personae* on A4v indicates an all-female cast, with a woman playing even the role of king.

26 Roger Chartier, "Epilogue," *A History of Private Life*, ed. Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, vol. 3: *Passions of the Renaissance*, ed. Roger Chartier (1986; Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1989), 609–11.

27 Cicero *De Officiis*, ed. and trans. Walter Miller. Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann; New York: Macmillan, 1913). Dated to 44 B.C.E., this tract, was Englished as *The first thre bookes of Tullyes offyces*, trans. Roberte Whyntinton (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1534). Eight reprints and new translations were published before 1700. For a brief but useful introduction to this book, see Cicero, *Selected Works*, trans. Michael Grant (London: Penguin, 1971), 157–58. Also see J. P. V. D. Baldon, "Auctoritas, Dignitatis, Otium," *The Classical Quarterly* 10.1 (May 1960): 43–50; here 46–47.

plained “that even in his [Scipio’s] leisure hours his thoughts were occupied with public business and that he used to commune with himself when alone.”²⁸ What the Loeb editor translates as “in his leisure hours his thoughts were occupied with public business” (“in otio de negotiis cogitare”) introduces a word for “business” in the English word’s original sense of “busyness.” The Latin word *negotium* is composed of the negative *nec* and *otium* and literally means “not leisure.” It is a useful distinction. Cicero did not coin the word, but gave new meaning to what earlier decades had thought of as military leave. Only in the first century C.E. did Latin writers like Aulus Gellius treat *negotium* as a middle state between *officium* and *otium*, duty and leisure.²⁹ Unlike *otium*, the word *negotium* never fully found its way into English; it does not even have an entry in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.³⁰ However, it readily fitted into the prose of macaronic authors like Robert Burton. In the preface to *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Burton quoted Macrobius in describing what he called his own “playing labour,” saying that he would turn his leisure into “the useful *negotium* of the ancients” (“otium in utile veterum negotium”).³¹

We can’t know how the younger Cicero responded to his father’s advice. He was studying in Athens at the time, and may have recognized it as a rather phil-

28 Cicero, *De Officiis* (see note 27), 270–71; bk. 3, para. 1. One translator of Cicero remarks that this essay “has perhaps exercised more influence on the thought and writing of the western world than any other secular work ever written”; see Cicero, *On the Good Life*, ed. and trans. Michael Grant (London: Penguin, 1971), 117.

29 When Cicero speaks of people who, desiring tranquility, “have removed themselves from public business and taken refuge in leisure,” he is thought to be taking aim at Epicureans in general and his old friend Atticus in particular. See Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On Duties*, ed. and trans. Benjamin Patrick Newton, Agora Editions (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2016), 50, note 163; bk. 1, para. 69.

30 The closest English equivalent is “negotiation” in the word’s original and now obsolete sense of “An act of dealing with another person; a private or business transaction”; *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, “negotiation,” 1a, www.oed.com (last accessed on May 28, 2018). See, e.g., the sermon preached to the House of Commons on Dec. 30, 1646 by the Puritan divine Matthew Newcomen (the MN of Milton’s SMECTUMNUS) in Matthew Newcomen, *The All-Seeing Vnseen Eye of God* (London: Christopher Meredith, 1647), 14: “The whole life of a Christian is a *negotiation* with God. ... Our traffick, our businesse is in heaven, with God.” Newcomen cites Philippians 3:20 and notes that Calvin uses *negotium* for the Christian’s “conversation” (*sermo*) with God, both there and in Hebrews 4:13.

31 Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 6th ed. (London: Henry Cripps, 1651), 4. I have slightly adjusted the seventeenth-century spelling.

osophical statement.³² He followed his father's republican principles with enough devotion that he required a pardon from the Emperor Caesar Augustus in 30 B.C.E. and with enough discretion that he got it. We do know, meanwhile, that some English schoolboys, including Aubrey, thought "Tully's Offices" were "too dry" to hold their attention.³³ We may suspect, however, that the youth of Vaughan's generation would have sympathized with the young Romans who had to make their way in a rapidly changing world where the future was anything but certain.

2 Public and Private Life

Vaughan grew up with a strong sense of duty to the political and religious authorities. He was, after all, a gentleman connected to the English crown through the Vaughans of Tretower. He was destined to inherit and perhaps enlarge his father's land holdings, while his brother was to become the vicar of the parish where they grew up. He had attended Oxford when its chancellor, Archbishop Laud, was a close advisor of the King; and he also attended the Inns of Court, from which the puritanical Prynne had been ejected. The King had his great source of troops in the west, including Breconshire, when Vaughan lived, and the other border counties. After his army's considerable losses at Naseby in June 1645, he turned to his Welsh followers. When the local dignitary in Brecon, Sir Herbert Price, gathered men to help defend the royalist town of Chester, approximately one hundred miles north of Brecon, both Vaughan and his brother Thomas joined Price's troop of horse. On September 24, 1645, they both saw action against parliamentary troops on the heath near Rowtan or Rowton, some two miles southeast of the city. The fighting there was among the bloodiest in the first civil war, with as many as six hundred Cavaliers losing their lives.³⁴ Thomas was captured and imprisoned, while Henry escaped with Price and others to Beeston Castle, another eight miles to the southeast, where they held out until a negotiated surrender on November 14. Vaughan wrote a poem about his departure from "craggie *Biston*" (52–53).

Vaughan was profoundly moved by the experience of war. He wrote poems on the deaths of two young men who served under Price, the first "slain at Rou-

³² Grant calls this section of the book a "personal statement" in Cicero, *Selected Works* (see note 27), 159. The younger Cicero was studying under Cratippus of Pergamon, whose philosophical views are preserved only in the older Cicero's *De Divinatione*.

³³ Schurr, *John Aubrey: My Own Life* (see note 5), 31.

³⁴ John Barratt, *The Great Siege of Chester* (New York: History Press, 2003), 136–38.

ton Heath near *Chester*,” the other “slain at *Pontefract*,” a Castle in Yorkshire (49–51, 58–59). Both seem to have been friends, either from Wales or from England. Price was captured at a battle in Hereford in December 1645 along with a former associate of Vaughan, Sir Marmaduke Lloyd, the Chief Justice of the Great Sessions court in Breconshire and two other counties. Lloyd was discharged from his office, and Price would have been forced out of office, if he was still the Member of Parliament for Brecon. Both would have been fined and perhaps driven into exile. Here was yet another loss for Vaughan, who had worked for Lloyd. Aubrey noted that Vaughan “was a Clarke sometime” to Lloyd,³⁵ which probably meant that he assisted during the judge’s quarterly visits to Brecon. He is unlikely to have travelled with Lloyd, who already had a paid assistant.³⁶

The time with Lloyd was Vaughan’s only public service other than his work as a country doctor – work that he told Aubrey, in 1673, “I have practised now for many years with great successe (I thank god!) & a repute big enough for a person greater than my selfe” (688). Seven years later, when Aubrey asked Vaughan to find “nativities” (horoscopes) for some Welshmen, he responded that he would do so gladly. He added that many “modern physicians” were “persecutors of Astrologie,” which doctors of earlier generations had often used in making diagnoses and giving prognoses. He added: “I suppose they had not travelled so far [as “the Antients”], & having once entred upon the practise, they were loath to leave off, and learn to be acquainted with another world” (692–93). He thus implied that he favored the “astrological medicine” of Paracelsus and of Paracelsians like Heinrich Nolle (d. 1626), two of whose books he translated.

When he returned to Brecon after the siege of Chester, Vaughan was shocked to see that the ancient stone walls had been breached in many places by townspeople hoping to avoid a siege by parliamentary troops (46). Having lost Chester, the king fled to Oxford, from which he escaped to Scotland in a servant’s clothing, the following April; Vaughan wrote a poem on “The King Disguis’d” (625–26). From the experience of Justice Lloyd and others, Vaughan knew that service for the King was a disqualifier for public service under the parliamentary government that ruled England officially from 1649 to 1660, and unofficially after the king’s capture in 1646. Before the third civil war was over, parliamentary representatives sequestered the vicarage that Vaughan’s brother had briefly held. The list of charges brought against him ended with the strongest, “being in armes personally against the Parliament.”³⁷ Similar fates befell Vaughan’s “wor-

³⁵ Aubrey’s *Brief Lives* (see note 7), 463.

³⁶ Hutchinson, *Henry Vaughan* (see note 4), 49–50, 68.

³⁷ Hutchinson, *Henry Vaughan* (see note 4) 93.

thy friend T[homas] Lewes” and his “learned friend T[homas] Powell,” rectors of a parishes in South Wales (60–61; 709). Powell had also fought in the king’s army.

With the established order gone, young men like the Vaughans faced a real question about their sense of duty. The public lives they had foreseen for themselves – Henry as a gentleman farmer with some knowledge of the law and a desire to serve the public, Thomas as a clergyman and scholar, perhaps a fellow of his old Oxford college – became impossible given the social changes imposed by Parliament. They found themselves forced into lives of relative leisure, unable to perform the duties they had imagined for themselves in the town council meetings or the parish church. They needed to find new ways to busy themselves, new forms of *negotium* to keep their leisure time from becoming mere idleness.³⁸ Like many of their royalist contemporaries, they needed to form new public identities.

In time, both chose to become unlicensed physicians – then a common practice for literate people suddenly out of work. (Their “distance learning” was performed entirely by reading books of medicine, mainly written in Latin.) In rural Wales, Henry found it necessary to prepare some of the medications he prescribed; meanwhile in the populous districts and suburbs of London, Thomas was able to focus on the production of medicines and to teach aspiring chemists for a fee. Both of them wrote for publication, with Thomas taking their manuscripts to London printers. When he wrote for publication, Thomas used the pseudonym Eugenius Philalethes (“well-born lover of truth”), taking pride in his aristocratic roots. Writing for a literate audience that did not need to have his Latin quotations translated, he said he intended his books for those who might “*be at Leasure*.”³⁹

3 City and Country Life

The distinction between life in the city and the country was at least as clear as that between public and private life – which were often associated with city and country life, respectively. For men like Vaughan and his younger cousin John Aubrey, ordinary opportunities were limited by the political realities. For Vaughan, the return to Wales meant leaving the largest city in the British Isles, at a time

³⁸ On the replacement of *officium* by *negotium* in early modern Europe, see Archangeli, *Recreation in the Renaissance* (see note 11), 14–15.

³⁹ *The Fame and Confession of the Fraternitie of R: C* (see note 6), a1v.

when London had a population of at least 200,000, and returning to life on the outskirts of Brecon, where the population was barely one percent of that size. It also meant leaving the greatest leisure time he had known, in taverns with young men who talked about the lives for which they were preparing. (At Oxford, the university statutes prohibited many of the activities a young man might enjoy.⁴⁰) His early poem "A Rhapsodie" was "written upon a meeting with some of his friends at the Globe Taverne, in a Chamber painted over head with a Cloudy Skie, and some few dispersed Starres, and on the sides with Land-scapes, Hills, Shepheards, and Sheep." Struck by the images of night during a daytime gathering, he contrasted the conviviality indoors with the "bawdy" happenings outside on Fleet Street with its "Catchpoles and Whores" (tax collectors and prostitutes), where activity seemed greater at night than in the day (10).⁴¹ In short, he had the countryman's reaction to the city that never sleeps. What he valued was talk with other young men of his age and social status, talk that moved easily from poetry to politics. When his poem becomes truly rhapsodic, in the final couplets, it celebrates "the prest grape drinke," by which he means the fortified Spanish wine known as sack. When amply imbibed, such drink leads to "dreames Poeticall" and makes a young man feel kinship with "the gods aboue" (12).

A parallel poem, written in Wales in 1645, shows the limits of conviviality with other educated young men. Vaughan wrote "To his retired Friend, an Invitation to *Brecknock*" shortly after returning from military duty. By "retired," he meant a person "withdrawn from society."⁴² There had been no sign of either his friend or the man's horse. Because the friend was no longer a bachelor, Vaughan assumed that he could not be womanizing and must instead be "rooting up of books." Vaughan urged him to avoid the hermit's life and again touted the virtues of sack, which he said could stir his friend's "Muse." He closed by urging the friend not to worry about the "ridiculous misery" of their time, but to come for a drink "while the slow icicle hangs / At the stiff thatch," which was to say, before winter ends (46–48).

⁴⁰ *Statutes of the University of Oxford Codified in the Year 1636 under the Authority of Archbishop Laud*, ed. John Griffiths, introduction by Charles Lancelot Shadwell (Oxford: Clarendon, 1888). Although Vaughan was free to visit theaters until they were closed by Parliament in 1642, his only familiarity with dramatic literature seems to have been with the published works of playwrights like Francis Beaumont (54–56).

⁴¹ For a discussion of the poem and its social context, see Lois Potter, *Secret Texts and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 141–42.

⁴² Oxford English Dictionary Online, "retired, adj. 1b" (last accessed on May 24, 2019).

Vaughan wrote a pair of poems, published only late in his life and addressed to one Lysimachus. Editors have not identified this person, beyond noting that the name is conventional and similar to other classical names used by poets in Vaughan's literary circle.⁴³ The late James Carscallen, of Victoria College in Toronto, wondered whether Lysimachus could be Thomas Vaughan, and I think there is much to be said for his suggestion. The first poem was written when or just after the poet was "*with him in London*" (632). It mocks the foppery of the wits and poetasters whom they saw the previous day and tells the addressee not to worry, since he has "a nobler Pedigree." It ends by assuring him, "Thy darkest nights outshine their brightest days." The companion poem concerns the youth's fascination with a beautiful maiden when he is in the country. He is attracted to Fida ("Fidelity"), but is bound to betray her and will surely break her heart (638–41). If Lysimachus is Thomas, the poems must have been written at an early date, perhaps even while Henry was still studying in London and Thomas was returning to Wales during Oxford's long summer vacations. In any event, the poems contrast the corruption of city dwellers with the innate virtue of those in the country. Even the man of noble pedigree becomes a rogue while visiting, presumably because he has been corrupted by city life.

From the start, Vaughan regarded his classical education, his *Latinitas*, as a key to his leisure occupation as a writer (32).⁴⁴ He translated Latin verse and prose, and wrote some Latin verses too. Two early examples of his translations reflected his views of city and country life. His translation of the tenth satire of Juvenal (ca. 120 C.E.) appeared at the end of his first volume of poetry (1646). The poem was made famous in an eighteenth-century adaptation by Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), where the details of life in second-century Rome were replaced by those of London. Johnson called his version "The Vanity of Human Wishes,"⁴⁵ and one might give a modern adaptation the title "Be Careful What You Wish For." The chief example in Juvenal's long poem is Sejanus (20 B.C.E.–31 C.E.), a favorite of the emperor Tiberius who seized increasing power until he was deposed and executed. Other examples come from all walks of life. They include a Roman beauty whose father killed her rather than allow a powerful aristocrat to make her his slave; an emperor's wife who married another man in her husband's absence and was put to death with him in retaliation; and the wealthy Croesus who financed wars in the east, where he was captured

⁴³ The name of Lysimachus, the father of Aristides, appears in several of Plato's dialogues.

⁴⁴ See Philip Macon Cheek, "The Latin Element in Henry Vaughan," *Studies in Philology* 44.1 (Jan. 1947): 69–88.

⁴⁵ Samuel Johnson, *London: The Vanity of Human Wishes: The Tenth Satire of Juvenal Imitated* (London: M. Cooper, 1749).

and executed. Juvenal's satire had appealed to Christian poets like Lactantius (ca. 250–ca. 325),⁴⁶ who liked the final lines because they confirmed the Christian position that the goddess Fortuna was a purely human invention: “nullum numen habes, si sit prudentia: nos te, / nos facimus, Fortuna, deam caeloque locamus.”⁴⁷ Literally translated, this says: “Fortune has no divinity could we but see it: it's we, / We ourselves, who make her a goddess and set her in the heavens.”⁴⁸ Vaughan substituted rhymed pentameter couplets for the dactylic hexameters and offered this translation: “To a wise man nought comes amisse: but we / Fortune adore, and make our deity” (31).

A quotation from the *Ars Poetica* of Horace (65–68 B.C.E.), included on a title page preceding the translation, stated Vaughan's determination to translate freely: “Nec uerbum uerbo curabi[s] riddere fides / Interpres” (“As a true translator, take care not to translate word for word”) (31).⁴⁹ He freely inserted references to soldiers and military martyrs because he saw in the satire a picture of his own time.⁵⁰ In his introduction to the volume, addressed “To all Ingenious Lovers of POESIE,” he wrote: “*These indeed may thinke, that they have slept out so many Centuries in this Satyre, and are now awaked.*”⁵¹ By this he suggested that readers in what he had just called “*the Dregs of an Age*” would see the similarities between the corruptions Juvenal denounced in second-century Rome and those of their own time and place, especially when described in their own language.

On a happier note, Vaughan translated an essay that praised the country life. The original was written in Spanish by Antonio de Guevara (ca. 1481–1545), a bishop and adviser to King Charles V of Spain and a person who obviously en-

⁴⁶ Peter Green, “Introduction,” Juvenal, *The Sixteen Satires* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1967), 9–63; here 9–10.

⁴⁷ Juvenal, Satire 10, 365–66, *Juvenal and Persius*, ed. and trans. G. G. Ramsay. Loeb Classical Library, revised (1940; London: William Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 220.

⁴⁸ Juvenal, *The Sixteen Satires* (see note 46). 216. Green's translation is quite chatty, as is the original Latin. Richard Quick incorporated portions of Satire 10 in sequence 11 of the one-man play *Juvenilia* (London: Oberon Books, 2014), first performed by Simon Callow in 1976.

⁴⁹ Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 133–34, in *Satires, Epistles, Ars Poetica*, ed. and trans. H. Ruston Fairclough. Loeb Classical Editions (1926; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1936), 460.

⁵⁰ For a list of insertions and their possible references, see Vaughan, *Works* (see note 3), 703.

⁵¹ Vaughan's most thorough modern editor, Alan Rudrum, notes the implication “that the contemporaries against whom the Juvenal translation is aimed are unlearned as well as politically immoral.” See Henry Vaughan, *The Complete Poems* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1976), 441.

joyed his time away from court. At one point, Guevara compared the beauty of a church holiday in the country with the fashion parade that alone distinguished the same holiday at court. After this, Vaughan inserted a transitional sentence that seems to reflect his own view: “But let us return from this *vitious* place into the *harmles Country*” (131).⁵² His translation was published in the same volume as his poetic “Invitation” to Brecon, in 1651. In a late poem called “Retirement,” Vaughan voiced this view emphatically, writing: “If *Eden* be on earth at all, / ’Tis that which we the *Countrye* call” (662–63).⁵³

Even before his military service under Col. Price, Vaughan enjoyed his visits to the town of Brecon, about three miles’ distance from his family’s house, and to Price’s residence in the disbanded Benedictine Priory. He liked to wander in the relatively uncultivated land adjacent to its garden. Still known as the Priory Grove, the land is extensive to this day, covering almost eighty acres of hillside.⁵⁴ He wrote a poem about the grove as “His usuall Retyrement,” meaning a favorite place of seclusion. He also found it a convenient place to walk with Catherine Wise, the woman he called Amoret or Etesia in early poems. His poem “Upon the Priory Grove” mentions that he revealed his love for her while walking there (15–16). The poem appeared in his first book of poetry, published in 1646, and he probably married Catherine that year.⁵⁵

In 1648, Vaughan’s life was enriched by the arrival in Brecon of the sixteen-year-old Katherine Philips, newly married to a Welsh parliamentarian. Philips had already formed a coterie of poets with her friends, and Vaughan seems to have exchanged poems with her. Philips wrote under the made-up name Orinda, after the fashion of the time, and her poems circulated in manuscript during her lifetime. The poems often struck royalist notes, despite her husband’s political commitments, and Vaughan wrote an admiring poem “To the most excellently accomplish’d, *Mrs. K. Philips*,” in which he compared her personal charm to that of her poems (61–62). Many years later, when he prepared a volume of his old writings, he solicited a commendatory poem from her. In the poem, she mentioned his early love poems and his translation of Juvenal’s satire, but also his turn from secular poetry to the sacred verse for which he would become

52 Vaughan used the Latin translation by Egidius van der Myle, *Oblectatio Vitae Rusticae* (Stettin: Rhetianis, 1633).

53 Vaughan had already published a poem with the same title, in which he expressed the hope to retire from the house of clay and ascend to the house that God has prepared for him (462–63).

54 The site is now maintained by the Woodland Trust, which has posted photos: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/wood/4594/priory-grove/#> (last accessed on Nov. 8, 2018).

55 See the extensive notes on the poem in Henry Vaughan, *The Complete Poems* (see note 51), 455–57.

best known (617–18). But although he got to know her during her long residence in Brecon, Vaughan was fully occupied with the renewed civil warfare when she first arrived and with the war's effects on his family.

4 Active and Contemplative Life

Many of the poems just discussed were written during the first civil war, which ended in 1646, and before the second civil war, which began in 1648 and continued until the death of Charles I in January 1649. During July 1648, Vaughan's younger brother William died at home, presumably of wounds received in battle or of typhus, which was commonly known as camp fever.⁵⁶ Whether or not Vaughan had begun his medical studies, largely from reading books on the subject, he must have attended his brother, and the loss was hard on him. Directly or indirectly, it led to the religious awakening that he called a regeneration or rebirth. By 1650, he had a volume of religious poetry ready for publication. It was printed for the stationer and bookseller Humphrey Blunden, who had become his brother Thomas's publisher and friend.

The volume was entitled *Silex Scintillans: or Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, the latter of these being spontaneous prayers that a person would throw off in the literal sense of "ejaculate." The book's title drew upon the biblical image of the heart as a flint or stone,⁵⁷ and the engraved title page showed the hand of God reaching from the clouds, holding the symbols of thunder and lightning, and striking both fire and water from a heart-shaped stone (see Fig. 1). In the Latin emblem facing the title page, the poet thanks God for having turned his stony heart to flesh and likens this personal miracle to the drawing of water from a rock at Horeb.⁵⁸ A further detail in the title page deserves attention. For the first time, the author is called "Henry Vaughan, *Silurist*." The name *Silurist* reflects Vaughan's self-identification with the region once dominated by the warlike tribe of the Silures, who resisted a Roman invasion in 48 C.E. Whereas his early *Poems* of 1646 were signed "*Henry Vaughan Gent.*," making him a proud royalist, the religious poems sought a non-English identity and what one critic has called "a new authority – a new way of speaking to the present circumstances."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Hutchinson, *Henry Vaughan* (see note 4), 70.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., Ezekiel 11: 19 and Zechariah 7: 12.

⁵⁸ Exodus 17: 6.

⁵⁹ Jonathan F. S. Post, "Henry Vaughan," *The Cambridge Companion to English Poetry: Donne to Marvell*, ed. Thomas N. Corns (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993),

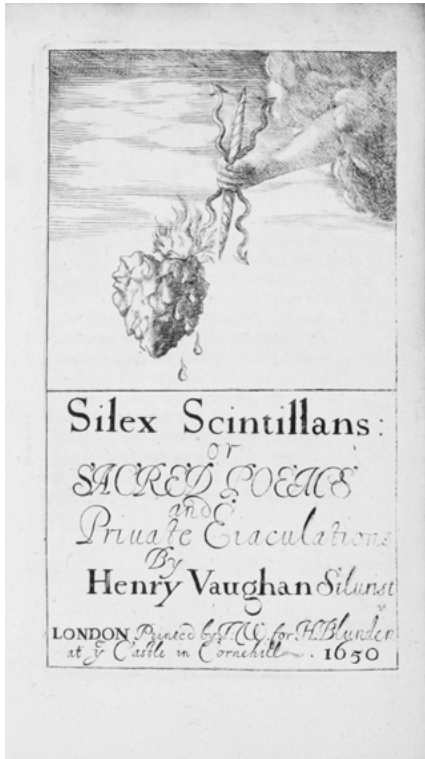


Fig. 1. Title page of Henry Vaughan, *Silex Scintillans* (1650).
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Vaughan's "Preface" to the expanded edition of *Silex*, printed in 1655, mentions a sickness from which God spared him, and some scholars have attributed his conversion to recovery from a sickness contracted during or after the death of his brother William. However, the context makes it clear that he has suffered a more spiritual ailment "for many years together" (386). Moreover, the preface gives credit also to the Anglican poet George Herbert (1593–1633), "whose holy *life* and *verse* gained many pious *Converts*, (of which I am the least)" (391). The volume's first poem, "Regeneration," is all about spiritual rebirth (397–99). The poet begins by describing a walk begun in "high spring" that soon turned wintry. He admits, "I straight perceived my spring / Mere stage, and show." He describes an increasingly allegorical landscape as he climbs a hill like that of Priory Grove. At the top he finds a scale, on which he weighs

256–74; here 257. On Vaughan's independence from religious and political radicals while he sometimes used similar symbolism, see Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640–1660* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 267–73.

his pleasures against his pains, only to realize that the pleasures weigh no more than smoke. Having realized this, he finds his way to a "Virgin-soile" where the only visitors are "Prophets, and friends of God." Once there, he realizes the profound change he is undergoing: "all was changed, and a new spring / Did all my senses greet." Finally, after other discoveries, he hears a "rushing wind" like that at the first Christian Pentecost, and in the otherwise calm landscape hears the wind whisper that it blows "where I please." This echoes Jesus' saying the wind that "bloweth where it listeth" is "like every one that is born of the Spirit."⁶⁰

The new, sacred poems were published while Vaughan was still in his twenties and the civil conflict far from ended. (The third civil war was already underway and would continue for another year, after which there was much bickering between former enemies.) It marked a new power in Vaughan's poetry, as he described landscapes reflecting his interest in Hermetic ideas about the world and its spiritual dimensions – an interest shared by his twin brother Thomas, who continued to place the poems and translations with suitable London booksellers.⁶¹ One group of poems, scattered throughout the volume, is characterized by the lack of titles, the transition from one poem to another being indicated only by a printer's pilcrow (¶). Their common theme is the loss of loved ones, and they are known by their opening lines:

Thou that knowst for whom I mourne ... (416)

Come, come, what doe I here, / Since he is gone ... (420)

Joy of my life! while left me here ... (422)

The penultimate poem in the 1650 volume was untitled and begins, "I walkt the other day." The poem echoes the opening "Regeneration," but the whispered words sound a different tone: "*Happy are the dead!*" In the final stanza, Vaughan reflects that leisure, like all that is best in life, is permanent only in heaven. The final ejaculative prayer concludes:

And from this Care, where dreams and sorrows raigh
 Lead me above
 Where Light, Joy, Leisure and true Comforts move
 Without all pain,

⁶⁰ See Acts 2: 2 and John 3: 8, the latter passage following on Jesus' famous remark, "Ye must be born again."

⁶¹ See Thomas Willard, "The Publisher of *Olor Iscanus*," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 75.2 (Second Quarter 1981): 174–79.

There, hid in thee, show me his life again
 At whose dumbe urn
 Thus all the year I mourn. (479)

The fifth line contains a reference to the mystical theology of Pseudo-Dionysius, who took to heart the words attributed to Saint Paul: “For ye are dead, and your life hid with Christ in God.” The life mentioned in that line would thus be that of both William Vaughan and Jesus.⁶² Such freedom from care and pain – such comfort, joy, and light as comes in the personal life of devotion – are inseparable from leisure. For some of Vaughan’s contemporaries – for example, Elias Ashmole, founder of the Ashmolean collection at Oxford University – the sentiment was captured in a Virgilian tag: *Deus nobis haec Otia fecit* (“God made this leisure for us”).⁶³

5 Conclusion

Leisure as we know it can be rather like greatness in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. Some are born to it, some achieve it through hard work, and some have it “thrust upon them.”⁶⁴ For the few in the last group, it is usually a matter of luck: good luck if they win the lottery or come into an inheritance, though bad luck when misfortune strikes them, their family, or the whole society. As for the fortunes of civil war in seventeenth-century England and its border counties in Wales and Scotland, which caused suffering for families of all social classes, let it suffice to mention Margaret Cavendish’s play *Bell in Campo*.

Cavendish (1623–1673) was a royalist whose family had suffered the loss of two sons as well as their estate in Colchester. She joined the Queen’s court in

⁶² Colossians 3: 3.

⁶³ *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, ed. Elias Ashmole (London: Nath[aneal] Brooke, 1652), 486. Virgil, *Eclogue* 1, line 6. Renaissance readers took these words as a reference to the Christian God. However, the original sense would be “the god,” and the traditional association would be Pan, who is mentioned twice in *Eclogue* 2. For the more topical and ironic suggestion that the god is Caesar, see Norman Austin, “The Goatherd: An Encounter with Virgil’s First *Eclogue*,” *Arion* 25.3 (Winter 2018): 1–42.

⁶⁴ William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night* 2.5.128–28. In context, the famous sentence is ironic, part of a plot to make a proud but foolish man aspire to an impossible marriage, far above his station in life. The play’s title refers to the English custom of celebrating the Eve of the Epiphany with a Lord of Misrule to ensure merriment amid the disruption of the ordinary social order. The function of this character is described and denounced in Stubbes, *Anatomy of Abuses* (see note 10), P1v–P4r.

France during the first civil war and did not return to England until after the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. While in exile, she wrote many works, literary and nonliterary, including the satiric drama *Bell in Campo*, a two-part play that might be called a seventeenth-century *Lysistrata*. It told of a war between armies of the Reformation and the ruling Faction, which was to say, the Roundheads and the Cavaliers. In the play, many sisters and wives follow the soldiers on both sides, only to grow weary of the war's ravages. They band together under the leadership of a strong woman, Lady Victoria, who is none other than wife of the Reformation army's "Lord General."

In the second part, a gentleman remarks that, rather than join her husband in the Reformation army's fight, Victoria instructs the "Female Army" to engage in "Heroic sports, as hunting the Stags, wild Boars, and the like."⁶⁵ Finally, the women negotiate a peace with the king that somehow pleases everyone. The king declares Lady Victoria the victor, for her having "brought Peace Safety and Conquest to this kingdom by your prudent conduct and valiant actions." He grants liberties to her, and to "all your sex," including "That they shall go to Plays, Masks [masques], Balls ... and as finely and bravely attired as they will."⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Margaret Cavendish, *Bell in Campo*, part 2, id., *Playes Written by the Thrice Noble, Illustrious and Excellent Princess, the Lady Marchioness of Newcastle* (London: A. Warren et al., 1662), 608–33; here 624; scene 14. See Vimala C. Pasupathi, "New Model Armies: Re-contextualizing the Camp in Margaret Cavendish's *Bell in Campo*," *English Literary History* 78.3 (2011): 657–85.

⁶⁶ Cavendish, *Bell in Campo*, part 2, 631; scene 20.

Allison P. Coudert

Jokes and the Eighteenth-Century Unconscious: Enlightening the Early-Modern European Id

1 Describing Eighteenth-Century Humor

This essay investigates the sheer malice, misanthropy, and misogyny of much eighteenth-century humor, the causes of this maliciousness, and the reasons why it abated toward the end of the eighteenth century and virtually disappeared from polite society by 1830. My sources are primarily English, but what they reveal about humor during this period applies across Europe since humorous texts were widely read and translated, and plots were freely borrowed across national boundaries. Henry Fielding (1707–1754) claimed that only the most “diabolical” person laughs at “Ugliness, Infirmary, or Poverty,” but his own fiction is full of cruel humor and violent incidents. Tobias Smollet’s (1721–1771) eponymous hero Peregrine Pickle shows no indication that tormenting a hunchback or tossing a dwarf into a pigsty is anything but amusing, and clearly many readers agreed.¹ Jonathan Swift’s (1667–1745) poem “A Ladies Dressing Room,” published in 1732, makes one cringe today at the sheer misogyny of his satirical verses. This humor was not the province of the lower classes but widely enjoyed in “polite” circles. We know, for example, that the aesthete Horace Walpole (1717–1797), the radical journalist and politician John Wilkes (1725–1797), and Samuel Johnson’s biographer, James Boswell (1740–1795), owned what were called “jest-books” at the time. Henry Fielding plagiarized material from them, and Laurence

1 Among these was George Orwell. As he writes in “I have tried to Tell the Truth,” *Collected Works*, ed. Peter Hobley, Ian Angus, and Sheila Davidson (London: Seeker & Warburg, 1998), 16:409: “Peregrine devotes himself for months at a time to the elaborate and horribly cruel practical jokes in which the eighteenth century delighted. When, for instance, an unfortunate English painter is thrown into the Bastille for some trifling offence and is about to be released, Peregrine and his friends, playing on his ignorance of the language, let him think he has been sentenced to be broken on a wheel. A little later they tell him that his punishment has been commuted to castration. Why are these petty rogueries worth reading about? In the first place because they are funny. Secondly, by simply ruling out ‘good’ motives and showing no respect whatever for human dignity, Smollett often attains a truthfulness that more serious novelists have missed.”

Sterne's (1713–1768) library contained many volumes devoted to just the kind of humor included in them. Swift was said to have laughed only twice in his life, and one of these was when he read *Mrs. Pilkington's Jests*.²

From our modern point of view, what is so striking about enlightenment humor is just how unenlightened it was and how consistent it was with the humor of earlier ages. As this essay will show, we find the same themes in the eighteenth century that predominated in medieval humor, but up-dated to fit the new economic and cultural landscape and the greatly expanded market for printed material.³ As we can see from "The Genii of Caricature" (1801), engraved by Thomas Rowlandson, people of all classes and ages flocked to print shops to see the latest satirical prints (Fig. 1). Their enormous popularity is underscored by another caricature showing a fashionable gentleman so intently perusing the latest caricatures in a print shop window that he is oblivious of the boy pickpocketing him (Fig. 2). What were all these people finding so funny, we wonder. The answer is pretty much the same jokes and pranks that amused previous generations. The poor, marginalized, and deformed were still the prime targets of eighteenth-century humor, but so too were upper-class individuals who failed to conform to prevailing social mores and cultural ideals of appearance, thought, and behavior. Women continued to be a source of misogynistic humor, and sex was a never-ending topic of hilarity. Finally, there was no end of scatological humor in an era when sanitation was still primitive but population and urban centers growing exponentially. This did change in the 1830s, and what this essay investigates is how and why.

2 Barbara Brown, "Jest, Jestbooks, and Jesters," *Encyclopedia of Humor Studies*, ed. Salvatore Atardo (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 1999), 407–09; Simon Dickie, "Hilarity and Pitilessness in the Mid-Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*. Explaining Sentiment 371 (Fall 2003): 1–22. Most jestbooks were produced for the middle- and upper-class reader since their price was out of the reach of a popular audience. Dickie argues that the popularity of jestbooks calls into question the extent of the growth of sensibility and sentimentalism in the eighteenth century and the idea that class division were sharpening as a result of a growing dichotomy between "polite" society and popular culture.

3 Between 1770 and 1830 London print shops published some twenty thousand satirical or humorous engravings. Half were about politics and international affairs, but the rest involved sex, debauchery, scandal, fashion, and other aspects of living in London. Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (New York: Walker & Company, 2006), xxi. Since this essay is about changing social and cultural conventions, I have concentrated on satirical prints dealing with these issues. For a discussion of political satire, see M. Dorothy George, *English Political Caricature to 1792: A Study of Opinion and Propaganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), and Herbert M. Atherton, *Political Prints in the Age of Hogarth: A Study in the Ideographic Representation of Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974).



Fig. 1: Thomas Rowlandson, “The Genii of Caricature” (1809)

I begin this investigation of “enlightenment” humor with no less a figure than Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1832) and a joke he played on one Herr Glaser, a corpulent merchant living in Stützerbach, Germany (south of Erfurt). In his biography of Goethe, Rüdiger Safranski describes Goethe’s “[m]adcap adventures” with the young Duke Karl August of Saxe-Weimar.⁴ The Duke had recently appointed Goethe as his privy councilor, and during the summer of 1776 he and Goethe, along with a party of friends, were in Ilmenau looking into the possibility of reopening some silver and copper mines. While there, they made an excursion to dine with Herr Glaser, who was proud to show off of a portrait of himself hanging in his dining room. According to F. W. Treba, a mining official present at the dinner, Goethe cut the face out of the portrait and “through the opening ... stuck his own manly, tanned, intellectual face with its fiery black eyes – now framed on both side by a heavy powdered wig – sat down in an arm-chair, placed the painting in its gilt frame on his knees, and concealed his legs

4 Rüdiger Safranski, *Goethe: Life as a Work of Art*, trans. David Dollenmayer (2013; New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2017), 572.



Fig. 2: Anon., “The Spectator: Pickpocket and Fashionable Gentleman” (1828)

under a white cloth.”⁵ After dinner Glaser’s guests proceeded to their host’s wine cellar, took out the wine barrels and rolled them down the hillside.⁶ That night Goethe commented in his diary: “Teased Glaser shamefully. Fantastic fun till 1 am. Slept well.” What Goethe brushed off as “teasing” would be, I think we can agree, the subject of a 911 call today.

1.1 Jokes Directed at the Poor, Maimed, and Marginalized:

While a clear whiff of upper-class disdain for the bourgeoisie motivated this prank against Herr Glaser, things were much worse when the targets of upper-class jokes were the poor, marginalized, and disabled. It is hard for us to appreciate in an age we commonly think of as enlightened how utterly absurd it would have been for members of the upper classes to credit common people with any kind of sensitivity or what would have been called “fine feelings.” This began to change with the rise of the cult of sensibility and the sentimental novel at mid-century, a subject I shall come back to. But apart from the idealized shepherds and shepherdesses in pastoral and Georgic poetry, neoclassical aesthetics only allowed common people to be represented as objects of laughter. Until I began working on this essay I had never understood the meaning of the phrase “to be on one’s high horse.” What it signifies is just that, the elevated vantage point of upper-class men, who both metaphorically and quite literally looked down their noses at common people from their lofty equine perches. A frequent setting for jokes involved just this, a gentleman on horseback meeting a common person and thinking “to put a trick on him” or having “a mind to be rudely merry.”⁷

Comedy was the place for common people, who routinely appear in farces, mock epics, burlesque tragedies, and satirical romances as foolish servants, village idiots, drunkards, grubby porters, rustic lovers, and country bumpkins, all of whom butcher whatever language they speak while obsessing about food, sex, and money. Malapropisms were a favorite way for the intelligentsia to mock servants, foreigners, and anyone from the Celtic fringe. As Tobias Smollett’s Matt Bramble affirmed, a Scot’s accent “gives a clownish air even to sentiments of

5 Wolfgang Herwig, ed., *Goethes Gespräche*. Biermannsche Ausgabe, 5 vols. (Zurich und Stuttgart: Artemis Verlag, 1965–1987), I, 222. Cited in Safranski, *Goethe* (see note 4), 211–12.

6 Safranski, *Goethe* (note 4), 211–12.

7 Simon Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter: Forgotten Comic Literature and the Unsentimental Eighteenth Century* (Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 2011), 11.

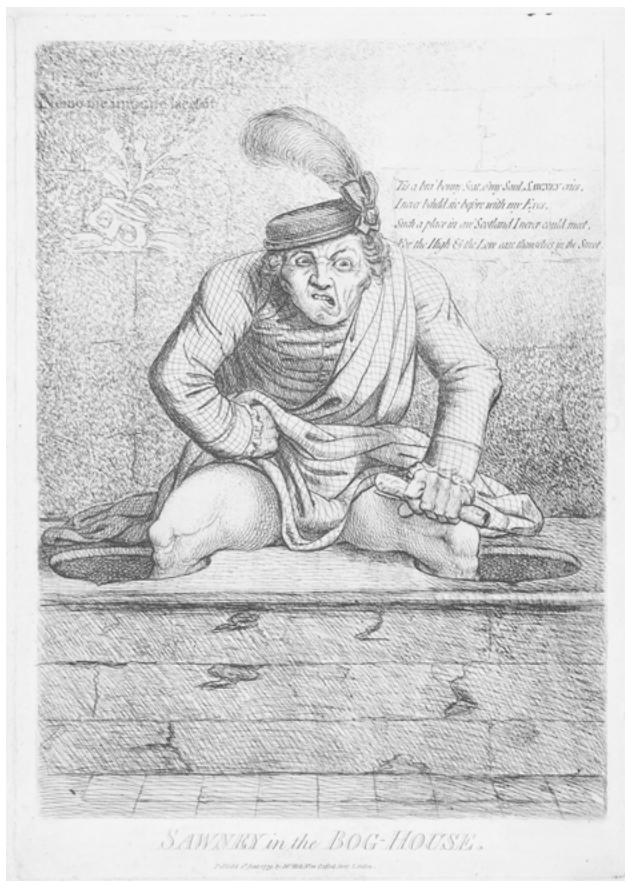


Fig. 3: Attributed to James Gillray, “Sawney in the Bog-house” (1779)

the greatest dignity and decorum.”⁸ For the English upper classes the Scots, Irish, and Welsh were a great source of disdainful merriment, as we can see from Samuel Johnson’s celebrated definition of oats as something eaten by horses in England but by people in Scotland. The caricature of “Sawney in the Bog House” (Fig. 3), attributed to James Gillray) makes it even clearer what the English thought about the average Scotsman’s intelligence. Two jokes about the stupidity of the Irish appear regularly in English jestbooks:

⁸ Tobias Smollett, *Humphrey Clinker*. Norton Critical Edition, ed. James I. Thorson (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1983), 215.



Fig. 4: Anon., "A Welsh feast on St. David's Day (1790)

A person ask'd an *Irishman*, why he wore his Stockings the wrong side outwards? *Because*, says he, *there is a Hole on the other Side.*

An Irish Servant being stuck by his Master, cried out, Devil take me if I am certain whether he has kill'd me or no; but if I am dead it will afford me great Satisfaction to hear the old Rogue was hang'd for killing me.⁹

Welshmen were not thought to be quite as stupid as Irishmen, undoubtedly because they were not Catholic, but nonetheless they were ferociously mocked for their accents, filthy dress, and poor hygiene. They were described in jokes as having leeks in their hats or on their plates, dirty feet, and foul breath from their consumption of leeks or too much cheese (Fig. 4).

In life as in literature, the deformed were routinely hired and paid to perform some physical task, which, on account of their clumsiness, produced uproarious laughter. The race between two old women, described in Fanny Burney's novel *Evelina* and Tobias Smollet's *Humphrey Clinker* caused great amusement, as did the "Crutch Dance," which proved a favorite interlude in variety shows

⁹ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 113–14.

and public theaters.¹⁰ Dancing cripples, hunchback clowns, and amputees were a standard feature on the London stage and at fairs and public celebrations. They also were part of the entertainment at the wedding of Henry IV and Marie de Medici in 1600, which shows that aristocrats and common folk shared a similar sense of humor (Fig. 5). A handbill for Bartholomew Fair advertises “A Cripples Dance by Six Persons with Wooden Legs and Crutches. ...”¹¹ The most famous deformity dancer in mid-century London was “Monsieur Timbertoe,” a one-legged dancer in “Mrs. Midnight’s Oratory.” Mrs. Midnight promised that the premises would be “well-air’d, and will be illuminated with Wax-Lights” to attract what she describes as the “quality.”¹²

The deaf, blind, and crippled were objects of great sport when they ventured out in public. Pierre-Jean Grosley (1718–1785), a French historian, travel-writer, and visitor to England, described the rough treatment an elderly Frenchman with an ear trumpet received from lower-class ruffians on a London street.¹³ Such boys did not limit themselves to tormenting the deaf, they would confuse the blind and trip up old, lame women with great good humor. Drunken apprentices were especially noted for harassing the old and crippled, but so too were young men of all social ranks.¹⁴ William Hay (1695–1755), a hunch-back scarcely five foot tall, who became a member of the British Parliament, describes the volley of taunts and insults his appearance inevitably provoked, one such being, “Don’t abuse the gentleman. “Can’t you see his back is up?” Hay advised the disabled to avoid fairgrounds, beer gardens, masquerades, and crowded places in general.¹⁵

Many comedies featured crippled characters. John Vanbrugh’s *Esop* (1697) was performed regularly until the 1750s to great amusement and applause. Ae-

10 The dance of old ladies is described in Gregorio Labranzi’s *A New and Curious School of Theatrical Dancing* (1716), trans. Derra de Monroda, ed. Cyril W. Beaumont (1716; New York: Dance Horizons, 1966), pt. 1, no. 15, 32–33: “Here two old women enter and dance, half-walking, half-shaking, as far as possible to the extreme front of the stage. Then they scratch themselves before and behind, spin round and go back to whence they began, with their backs to the audience, where they perform the same gestures. These goings backwards and forwards continue until the end of the first air. Meanwhile a youth enters who, on seeing the old women, laughs at them.”

11 Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 65.

12 Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 65–66.

13 Pierre-Jean Grosley, *A Tour to London; Or New Observations on England and its Inhabitants*, 2 vols. (London: Lockyer Davis, 1772), I, 185.

14 Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 65–68.

15 William Hay, *Deformity: An Essay*, ed. Kathleen James-Cavan. English Literature Series (Victoria, BC: University of Victoria Press, 2004), 26.



Fig. 5: Engraving portraying a burlesque interlude at the marriage of Henry IV and Marie de Medici in 1600

sop's deformity as a twisted hunchback was well-known, which apparently made Vanbrugh's casting him as the bridegroom in a comedy about forced marriage

hilarious. In the play, Esop is boxed around the ears by an angry widow, and he dresses up in foppish attire to appear handsome, all of which makes him the butt of constant insults, much to the enjoyment of the audience. He is referred to as “that unfinished Lump, that Chaos of Humanity,” “Monster” “Baboon,” “Crump,” “Devil,” “treacherous piece of Vermin.” He eventually resolves the plot, but not before innumerable cripple jokes have been enjoyed at his expense. The great actor, playwright, and producer David Garrick (1717–1779) employed many of the same insults in his first comedy, *Lethe: or Aesop in the Shades* (1745). Garrick was a joker himself. He loved pranks and set up an entertainment for his upper-crust friends, James Fox, Edward Burke, Edward Gibbon, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Topham Beauclerk, and Joshua Reynolds, involving an old and young man running backwards and forwards between two baskets filled with stones. Whoever emptied his basket faster was the winner.¹⁶ It wasn’t unusual for people to hire servants with some disability or deformity to entertain guests after dinner. These servants played the part of the fools and court jesters of earlier centuries. The household of Mme. de Rambouillet (1588–1665), for example, was filled with dwarfs, stutterers, acrobats, and, oddly or hilariously enough, bad poets.¹⁷

As we have seen from the example of Herr Glaser, however, one didn’t have to be poor to be on the receiving end of jokes. Everyone was a potential target. Laughing at the physical misfortunes of one’s equals and superiors was routine, especially if they were enemies. The first Earl of Shaftesbury (1621–1683), disabled by gout and ague and with a copper tube implanted in his abdomen to drain a hydrated cyst, was a subject of great ridicule. Alexander Pope (1688–1744), with his dwarf-like stature and twisted spine, was another target.¹⁸ Samuel Foote (1720/21–1777), the English playwright and actor who earned the sobriquet “the English Aristophanes” for his ruthless satire, nicknamed the evangelical preacher George Whitefield (1714–1779) “Dr. Squintum,” a name that implied Whitefield’s pious hypocrisy – one eye looked up at God, while the other looked about for luscious ladies.¹⁹ It should be added that Foote was himself the subject of merciless satire after he lost his leg (i. e., foot!) in a riding accident, which left

¹⁶ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 73–74.

¹⁷ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 74.

¹⁸ Helen Deutsch, *Resemblance and Disgrace: Alexander Pope and the Deformation of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

¹⁹ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 74. See Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints from the Age of George III* (New Haven, CT: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1996).

him crippled and in constant, excruciating pain.²⁰ Joseph Addison (1672–1719), the English essayist, poet, playwright, and politician, describes comic gatherings of people with assorted disabilities organized by “one of the Wits of the last Age.”²¹ These included an assembly of men with long chins, a dinner with “Oglers” or people with poor eyesight, who managed to do all kinds of inappropriate things, and finally a dinner of stammerers. Addison signaled his disapproval only after describing the various events at considerable length, which suggests his disapproval was more perfunctory than real. One has only to consider the spa town of Bath to appreciate the callousness ingrained in eighteenth-century life, for here fashionable people mixed with all kinds of invalids. The baths lay right under the windows of the pump room, allowing fashionable visitors ample opportunity to gawk and giggle at the invalids below, while poor folk lined up along the railings of the bath to snigger. In Smollett’s novels Bath’s famous balls become one big crutch dance. Rowlandson’s satirical illustrations of Bath bring this home.²²

Violence was always a possibility in the eighteenth century, especially when individuals of different social ranks interacted. While this violence shocks us, it was a regular source of amusement at the time and certainly not anything to be ashamed or reticent about. In a letter to Stella, Swift describes boxing his Irish footman around the ears. He complained of a strained thumb as a result and remarked that he would have chopped off his servant’s ear had not his friend Bolingbroke been in the way.²³ The legal right to strike servants stayed on the books until 1861. Such scenes of brutality were therefore a regular occurrence. Many jokes involved rowdy gentlemen finding a beggar or drunken laborer asleep in a ditch and stealing whatever little money he had in his pockets to spend on drink. Simon Dickie, an expert on the cruelty of early-modern English humor, comments, “One struggles to understand a world in which it could be funny to rob a pauper of his last resources. ... And yet it was so.”²⁴ Behind this lay the assumption described above, that common people were insensitive and could not feel pain in the same way as their social superiors.

20 Ian Kelly, *Mr. Foote’s Other Leg: Comedy, Tragedy and Murder in Georgian London* (London: Picador, 2012).

21 See “On Whimsical Notions and Practical Jokes,” *Spectator*, no. 371 (6 March 1712).

22 Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 78–79. Cf. *The Diseases of Bath: A Satire* (London: printed for J. Roberts, at the Oxford-Arms in Warwick-Lane, 1737). For an extensive discussion of Bath and its role as a spa, see the contribution to this volume by Melvyn Lloyd Draper.

23 Jonathan Swift, *Journal to Stella*, ed. Harold Williams, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), I: 307 (3 October 1711).

24 Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 131

Dickie describes the high junks of men about town or gangs of “bucks,” as they were called, who left taverns drunk and overturned milk maids – one has to remember that underwear was not yet a standard article of clothing – cudged apprentices, and tossed beggars in blankets. In *Fun*, a “Parodi-Tragi-Comical Satire” (1752), the author, William Kenrick, has the character Bullyboy advise his country cousin on how “to be witty the right way” if he is to succeed in the city:

you must learn to bully, pull people by the Nose, trip up their Heels, break their Heads and so forth... and to be truly humorous you must... bilk Taverns, – tumble the Waiters down Stairs, – break all the Glasses in your Way, – sally into the Street, – take all the young Women you meet for Whores, and kick the old ones into the Kennel,²⁵ – knock down the Watch, – lie all Night in Covent-garden Round-house, be carried before the *Justice*, where you have nothing to do but to prove your Father a Gentleman, and the old Dog his Worship will stand by you in abusing all the World. – This, my Boy, is true Humour.”²⁶

For all of Kenrick’s satirical intent, these sorts of activities were simply an accepted aspect of eighteenth-century life.²⁷

Court documents, newspaper reports, letters, biographical accounts, and novels give a further picture of what young rakes did in or out of their cups in order to have a bit of fun. They roamed the streets, breaking windows and smashing lamps. They started riots in fairgrounds and theaters. They charged into brothels, tossing furniture out of windows and kicking prostitutes downstairs. There is a report of a Lord who hired a bear and let it loose in a chop-house. A group of bucks reportedly threw an alewife out a window and then added her to their bill; they nailed a night watchman into his sentry box and took a blind horse into a china shop. They dragged fops by the nose, and made horses bolt by putting nettles under the tails. Wig-snatching was a lucrative sport, involving elaborate schemes with monkeys trained to do the snatching.²⁸ Setting trip wires, digging booby traps and filling them with manure were other ways for young men to get a laugh. They sprinkled sneezing powders in public places and emptied chamber pots onto beds. They put soot in soup and encouraged everyone to take great helpings of sharp mustard. They made people throw up after dinner by convincing them they had eaten roast dog or fricasseed

²⁵ The gutter running down the center of streets and containing all kinds of nasty refuse.

²⁶ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 133–34.

²⁷ See Louis C. Jones, *The Clubs of the Georgian Rakes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942)

²⁸ See the following website for a caricature of monkeys snatching wigs: <https://www.queerty.com/highly-elaborate-wig-snatching-schemes-much-thing-18th-century-20170116> (last accessed on Jan. 15, 2019).

rat. They put laxatives in the wine and then laughed uproariously when their victims could literally not contain themselves.²⁹ In *The Gay Delavals* Frances Asklam gives a description of the kind of pranks Francis Blake Delaval (1727–1771) organized for his friends at his great house in Northumberland. As we can see, they followed the same pattern:

The assiduous host and his friends, candlesticks in hand, passed from bedroom to bedroom, stifling their laughter as they made things comfortable for their unsuspecting guests. Ducks and hens were put between the sheets, a bath of water placed beneath a remarkable bed that let down in the middle by means of pulleys, mannikins like ghosts of ancient Delavals were set up in clothes closets, and a sleepy housemaid was pinched awake to take in the seams of a jilted baronet's suit of clothes so that when he awoke he would think love had given him dropsy. One guest was kept in bed three days by persuading him that it was still night. ...³⁰

To help pass the time of day, Delaval organized a great contest of “sparrow-mumbling,” which entailed biting off the heads of these small birds.³¹

The print media loved to publish accounts of hoaxes, real or imaginary, because they were extremely popular and made for great sales. The Bickertaff hoax perpetrated by Jonathan Swift was one of the most famous. April Fool's Day was Swift's favorite holiday and the date on which his hoax came to fruition. Isaac Bickerstaff was a pseudonym Swift used, and under this name he penned the fake *Almanac of 1708*, in which he predicted the impending death of the famous astrologer and almanac writer, John Partridge, who had annoyed Swift with his criticism of the Anglican Church. On the appointed day, Swift announced that Partridge had indeed died, which he hadn't, but by April 1st the news of Partridge's death had circulated so widely that he and his wife were awakened by a sexton asking if there were any plans for a funeral sermon. Partridge became a laughing stock as a result of this hoax; he was discredited as an astrologer and ceased to publish his almanacs.³²

²⁹ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 145–46. Cf. Lance Bertelsen, *The Nonsense Club: Literature and Popular Culture, 1749–1764* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

³⁰ Frances Asklam, *The Gay Delavals* (London: Cape, 1955), 74–75.

³¹ Asklam, *The Gay Delavals* (note 30), 74. On “sparrow-mumbling,” see Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* (New York: Pantheon, 1983), 148. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines sparrow-mumbling as “the action of holding a cock-sparrow's wing in the mouth, and attempting to draw in the head by movement of the lips.”

³² George P. Mayhew, “Swift's Bickerstaff Hoax as an April Fools' Joke,” *Modern Philology* 61.4 (May 1964): 270–80; William Alfred Eddy, “The Wits vs. John Partridge, Astrologer,” *Studies in Philology* 29.1 (January 1932): 29–40.

Hoaxes like this went along with more “learned” ones – tricking antiquarians into paying large sums for forged documents and deceiving naturalists with baby mermaids or horned roosters.³³ The “father” of modern chemistry, Robert Boyle (1627–1691), was duped into sending money and gifts to a secret international alchemical society whose members included a “Chinese gentleman” named “Pursafeda,” who was reputed to have exhibited alchemical flasks containing a developing homunculus, a five-month-old foal, and a fox.³⁴ William Hogarth (1697–1764) loved hoaxes and engaged with friends in the famous “Rembrandt Hoax” of 1751, which tricked the connoisseur Thomas Hudson into buying a forged Rembrandt. Hudson was then invited to a lavish dinner to celebrate his purchase, during which he was confronted by his own gullibility and utterly humiliated.³⁵

The most famous hoaxer of the age was John, second Duke of Montagu (1690–1749), who famously organized a dinner for serious professional men. Funny mirrors were set up in the vestibule of the Duke’s mansion, which resulted in the guests arriving at the dinner table with their wigs askew. At another time, the Duke invited the famous French aristocrat and philosopher Montesquieu (1689–1755) to his country estate. As Montesquieu later recounted, “His singularity knew no bounds ... before I had leisure to get into any sort of intimacy ... he soused me over head and ears into a tub of cold water.”³⁶ While Montesquieu took this all in good fun, one of the Duke’s last pranks didn’t work out so well. In 1740 he and the Duke of Richmond advertised that a man would insert himself into a quart bottle of wine at the Little Haymarket Theatre and then sing inside it, a sarcastic reference to the outlandish boasts of contemporary magicians. A huge crowd appeared, proving Montagu’s contention that people, especially common ones, were credulous and stupid.³⁷ But in its fury at being deceived, the crowd burned down the theatre, which required £4,000 pounds

³³ On eighteenth-century hoaxes, see <http://hoaxes.org/archive/display/category/1700s> (last accessed on Jan. 15, 2019).

³⁴ Lawrence Principe, *The Aspiring Adept: Robert Boyle and his Alchemical Quest* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 115.

³⁵ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 150.

³⁶ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 150.

³⁷ On the Continent similar pranks were carried out by the famous trickster figure Till Eulenspiegel, known in printed form since ca. 1510. See Albrecht Classen, “Der komische Held Till Eulenspiegel: Didaxe, Unterhaltung, Kritik,” *Wirkendes Wort* 42.1 (1992): 13–33; id., “Transgression and Laughter, the Scatological and the Epistemological: New Insights into the Pranks of Till Eulenspiegel,” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 33 (2007): 41–61; id., “Laughter as the Ultimate Epistemological Vehicle in the Hands of Till Eulenspiegel,” *Neophilologus* 92 (2008): 417–89. As to magic as a form of entertainment, see the contribution to this volume by Christa A. Tuczay.

out of the Duke's pocket to rebuild.³⁸ Some critics found Montagu's antics puerile. Among these was his mother-in-law, the Duchess of Marlborough. As she said, his only talent was "to get people into his gardens and wet them with squirts, to invite people to his country houses and put things into their beds to make them itch, and twenty other such pretty fancies." This was, she commented "natural to boys of fifteen," but "he is about two and fifty."³⁹ But many others thought the Duke's pranks hilarious. "No one was so "cheerful and entertaining," claimed Lord Hervey.⁴⁰

What is so surprising for us at first glance is that Montagu was as famous for his benevolence as his pranks. He was a patron of the former slaves Francis Williams and Ignatius Sancho. He gave a lavish handout to a beggar on his street, sent roast chicken to a starving widow, and provided a living for an impoverished curate. He loved animals, adopting ugly and unwanted lapdogs and keeping a geriatric hospital for retired cows and horses. Walpole described him "a most amiable man, and one of the most feeling I ever knew."⁴¹ As Dickie points out, this combination of cruelty and benevolence should not surprise us, however, because at the root of both lie the same driving force, or what Dickie calls "structure of feeling," since "both evince the same appalling thrill of having others absolutely in one's power, of determining their happiness or misery."⁴²

The psychology of much eighteenth-century benevolence follows this pattern. It involves teasing and toying with the unfortunate, the disabled, or just people who were disliked and, then, at the last moment offering unexpected forms of charity and kindness. Some of these stories were undoubtedly apocryphal – the fake news of their day – but the fact that many people believed them tells us a lot about the actual behavior of upper-class males and the routine jokes and elaborate hoaxes they planned and executed.⁴³ This humor presupposes a level of cruelty that makes us extremely uncomfortable today, although our

38 Simon Dickie, "Joseph Andrews and the Great Laughter Debate," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 34 (2005): 271–332; here 279. See also the text by William Walsh addressing this issue, adapted from his *Handy-Book of Literary Curiosities* (1893), online at: http://hoaxes.org/archive/permalink/the_great_bottle_hoax_of_1749 (last accessed on Jan. 15, 2019).

39 Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 150–51.

40 Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 151.

41 Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 151.

42 Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 151–52.

43 Robert Shoemaker, *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: A & C Black, 2004). Donna T. Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice: The Attack on Duelling, Suicide, Adultery, and Gambling in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013).

own more hidden cruelties should make us think twice before condemning the cruelty of earlier ages.

1.2 Sexual and Misogynist Humor

As one can easily imagine, sexual humor was as prevalent then as now, if not much more so since we live in a time and place shaped by both puritanical and Victorian thinking. The topic of sex took up much space in jestbooks, newspapers, comedies, satires, and most especially in satirical engravings, which could slip past the censors more easily than written texts. Before the 1800s there was plenty of sex to be had in London and great candor in discussing it. Writing in the 1820s, the radical reformer Francis Place (1771–1854) comments that conversations on “the union of the sexes” had been “much less reserved” when he was young and that “books relating to the subject were readily available to boys and girls.” Place admits that at age thirteen he pored over Aristotle’s *Masterpiece*, a sexual advice manual falsely attributed to Aristotle. Interestingly enough, the badly drawn illustrations of copulation in this text convinced him that the Virgin birth was a fantasy. Place claims that the girls of his youth were “under comparatively little restraint,” and their early loss of virginity did not stand in the way of marriage. We have to remember that young men were expected to sow their wild oats at the time.⁴⁴ And wild they were. A Cheshire clergyman described the everyday activities of rural gentry as follows: “... [M]aking noises to imitate beasts, singing bawdy songs, telling bawdy tales, boasting of their exploits with women, relating filthy stories, drinking disgusting toasts, and getting thoroughly drunk made up the sum of their amusements whenever they met.” They farted at passing women and “fox-hunting, drinking, bawling out obscene songs and whoring was the employment, the delight and the boast of these people.”⁴⁵

Urban young men were right up there with their country cousins when it came to rowdy behavior and sexual escapades. By the age of twenty James Boswell had tried to seduce over a dozen upper class ladies, made mistresses out of three wives, four actresses, Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s paramour, three middle-class women, and had sex with over sixty street girls. Although he protected himself with condoms, he was infected with gonorrhea at least seventeen times. Boswell admits he did feel guilty in terms of his wife, but just the thought

⁴⁴ Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 100–01.

⁴⁵ Cited in Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 113.

of the women he would encounter in London overcame whatever scruples he had, and off he went to his beloved English metropolis.⁴⁶

Jestbooks were read in company, by solitary people, in clubs, and at all kinds of social gatherings. Although some jestbooks were expressly addressed to women, their humor was virtually identical to that aimed at male audiences. Many women undoubtedly enjoyed bawdy humor, even though a great deal of it was intensely misogynist. There were, to be sure, occasional sexual jokes at male expense. One such went as follows: “a gentleman happening to make water against a house, did not see two young ladies looking out of a window close by, till hearing them giggling, when looking towards them, he asked, what made them so merry. “O lord, said one of them, a very little thing will make us laugh.”⁴⁷ In his monumentally informative *City of Laughter*, Vic Gatrell suggests that given the scanty fashions of the late 1700s, women may not have been as repressed or suppressed as we tend to think. For example, he gives the example of one woman who embroidered passages from scripture on her clothing, including the following one on her garters, “set your affection on things above.” Bawdy tastes and the free discussion of sexual matters were fostered by published accounts of divorce and adultery trials, which were printed without expurgation and enjoyed by both sexes, young and old.⁴⁸

Sexual humor cut across class lines. Horace Walpole, son of a prime minister, aesthete, collector, and snob, had an extensive collection of bawdy prints. One showed Prince William caressing the bare-breasts of his Jamaican paramour. Another by Gillray entitled “The Siege of Blenheim – or the New System of GUNNING, Discover’d” (1791) depicts the bare buttocks of Lord Blandford protruding from a window in Blenheim Palace, projecting excrement at Miss Gunning, who claimed he was her lover. She sits astride a phallic canon with legs up in the air.⁴⁹ Walpole, like so many other men of his station, knew the difference between what could or could not be said in polite society and what could be said or done in the company of his male friends.

46 Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 314–16. William B. Ober, “Boswell’s Gonorrhea,” *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 45.6 (June 1969): 587–636.

47 Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 360. Although misogynistic humor was prevalent in the eighteenth century, the growing rank of female authors did push back against male misogyny. See Audrey Bilger, *Laughing Feminism: Subversive Comedy in Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, and Jan Austen*. Humor in Life and Letters Series (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University, 2002). But at the same time, as Bilger makes clear, laughter, and especially female laughter, “came to be seen as a menace to society’s very foundations” because of the threat it posed to male dominance (16).

48 Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 359–60.

49 Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 255.

Bawdy humor and male clubs went hand-in-hand. Few people today know that “The Starred Spangled Banner” started out as a popular drinking song for the Anacreontic Society, a London gentleman’s club of amateur musicians dedicated to the pleasures of wine, women, and song. The song is performed on YouTube, where one can hear the repeated refrain, “May our club flourish happy, united and free! And long may the sons of Anacreon intertwine The Myrtle of Venus with Bacchus’s Vine.” There were many far more explicitly sexual songs than this. One such, “The Plenipotentiary,” celebrated the legendary size of the Algerian ambassador’s private parts and the powerful effect these had on ladies. This kind of song expressed the underlying assumptions eighteenth-century males had about sex. These assumptions were basically libertine, resting on the belief that the pursuit of sexual pleasure was justified by the promptings of nature and that male and female sexual desires were similar. Consequently, in male minds women were unfailingly satisfied by sex and hungered for it, whatever they might say to the contrary.⁵⁰ A somewhat contradictory line of argument claimed that every maiden must be “undone” at some point; sexual violence was therefore inevitable, but women would get over it and admit they enjoyed it after the fact. It was taken for granted that the loss of virginity made a virgin “squeak” or “roar,” clearly something males enjoyed thinking about. In taking this attitude, eighteenth-century men were little different from many of their ancient, medieval, and even modern counterparts, who viewed sex as a game of conquest or, dare one say, one-upmanship in the war between the sexes or, indeed, the war between individual men.⁵¹

This darker aspect of eighteenth-century sexuality comes out especially clearly in the view of rape as an unstinting source of comedy. In examining the records of the day-to-day operations of local summary justice, news reports, and unsuccessful rape trials reported in the Old Bailey Sessions Papers, Dickie was struck by their “disturbing jokiness.”⁵² This is confirmed by his discovery of a long-lost anthology of comic trials entitled “Humor of the Old Bailey” (ca. 1772), projected as a multivolume “Collection of all the merry and diverting Trials for above these thirty years.” Only one volume has re-emerged so far, cov-

⁵⁰ Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 296–98.

⁵¹ See Joan Kelly’s classic article, “Early Feminist Theory and the ‘Querelle des Femmes,’ 1400–1789,” *Signs* 8.1 (Autumn 1982), 4–28. On the “Querelle des Femmes,” see Monique Frize, *Laura Bassi and Science in 18th Century Europe* (Heidelberg, New York, et al.: Springer Verlag, 2013), ch. 2; and Sonya Rudifkoff, “Review: La Querelle des Femmes,” *The Hudson Review* 27.2 (Summer 1974), 273–82. The Querelle des Femmes reappears during every period of social change, including today.

⁵² Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 191.

ering the years 1720–1727. In this volume rape trials are singled out as comic events. The book reprints verbatim trials from the Old Bailey Session Papers with their repeated references to gaffawing judges and allusions to the light-hearted courtroom atmosphere. In Dickie's words, "No changes were required to turn an official court record into a winter evening's amusement."⁵³

One of the most common of all eighteenth-century rape jokes went as follows: "A Woman prosecuted a Gentleman for Rape; upon Trial the Judge ask'd her, if she made an Resistance? '*I cry'd out, an't please your Lordship*, said the Woman. *Ay, said one of the Witnesses, but that was nine Months after.*"⁵⁴ This joke rests on the belief that women conceived only if they took pleasure in the sex act. Dickie calls this a "stubborn folk belief,"⁵⁵ but it was actually an established tenet of Galenic medicine, and its implication was clear: rape could not have been committed in such cases precisely because the women conceived.⁵⁶ Jokes and anecdotes dealing with rape follow this line of reasoning and are filled with prostitutes, pretended virgins, and hypocritical wives who make charges of rape as a means of extortion and bringing false charges against wheezened old men or dwarfs who could not possibly have committed the crime. Such jokes reinforced the idea that women were consummate liars who would do anything to get into men's pants and then avoid the consequences.⁵⁷

The impossible levels of modesty expected of respectable women during the eighteenth century made it difficult to know when "no" really meant "no." Even

⁵³ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 193.

⁵⁴ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 193.

⁵⁵ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 194.

⁵⁶ A common idea was that women simply could not be raped against their will. See Balzac's short story "La jeune filles de Portillon," and the discussion of this in Andrew J. Counter, "Tough Love, Hard Bargains: Rape and Coercion in Balzac," *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 36.1/2 (Fall Winter 2007–2008): 61–71. On Galen and gynecology, see Michal Boylan, "The Galenic and Hippocratic Challenges to Aristotle's Conception Theory," *Journal of the History of Biology* 17 (1984): 83–112.

⁵⁷ See Anna Clark, *Women's Silence, Men's Violence: Sexual Assault in England 1770–1845* (London and New York: Pandora Press, 1987; *Rape: An Historical and Social Enquiry*, ed. Sylvana Tomaselli and Roy Porter (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); Anne Greenfield, ed., *Interpreting Sexual Violence, 1660–1800*. The Body, Gender and Culture, 14 (London and New York: Routledge, 2015). On the idea that rape charges by women were malicious, see Antony E. Simpson, "The 'Black-mail Myth' and the Prosecution of Rape and its Attempt in Eighteenth-Century London: The Creation of a Legal Tradition," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 77.1 (1986): 101–50. Simpson argues that lower class women did use rape charges to gain public acknowledgment of injury. Laurie Edelstein disagrees, emphasizing the procedural obstacles to bringing rape charges in "An Accusation Easily to be Made? Rape and Malicious Prosecution in Eighteenth-Century England," *The American Journal of Legal History* 42.4 (October 1998): 350–90.

a kiss was expected to be half-refused. This supplied the subject for French boudoir art like Fragonard's "The Lock" or Garnier's "La douce résistance." Clarissa's despicable rapist Lovelace used such assumptions to his advantage. As he says, "it is cruel to ask a modest woman for her consent. It is creating difficulties for her."⁵⁸ The theme of women swooning or sleeping during intercourse, which seems utterly ludicrous to us, persisted into the nineteenth century, as we can see from Heinrich von Kleist's novella *Die Marquis von O* (1808). The sleeping woman shows up in French pictorial erotica. Drinking songs tell of a man who finds a young virgin sleeping in a field and easily "rifles her charms."⁵⁹ Clarissa faints in Lovelace's arms and is thus unconscious while he commits the dastardly deed. But at least in this novel there is a protracted discussion of the bind women faced when it came to any overt expression of sexual desire on their part. No such psychological acuity can be seen in the numerous ballads and mock complaints written about women who long to be ravished. In *Tatler* no 84 (22 October 1709) Steele has Bickerstaff comment on the predilection young women have for rape trials: "I have known a young woman shriek at some parts of the evidence; and have frequently observed, that when the proof grew particular and strong, there has been such an universal flutter of fans, that one would think the whole female audience were falling into fits." This was utter nonsense since rape trials were rare and women did not attend them, but it does reveal what men of all classes really thought about women when it came to sex. This belief provided the foundation for the constant stream of jokes about women's fears of rape as simply signs of their hypocrisy, vanity, and projection of secret wishes. Nuns were supposedly particularly prone to such fantasies.⁶⁰ Lucretia and Helen of Troy were routinely trashed as whores, who egged on their admirers; Susanna only resisted the elders because they were old and ugly; Leda consented to her rape.⁶¹ Pope's *Rape of the Lock* com-

58 Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa Harlowe. The Novels of Samuel Richardson*, 20 vols. (London: Chapman & Hall Ltd, 1902), 3:272.

59 Philip Stewart, *Engraven Desire: Eros, Image and Text in the French Eighteenth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992).

60 The overly sexual antics of the nuns at Loudun give some support to this idea. See Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), for an analysis of the possessed nuns, sexual behavior, and the way their contemporaries interpreted it.

61 Norman Bryson, "Two Narratives of Rape in the Visual Arts: Lucretia and the Sabine Women," *Rape: An Historical and Social Enquiry*, ed. Sylvana Tomaselli and Roy Porter (New York: Blackwell, 1989), 152–73.

bines all the elements of male views about rape: Belinda is a prude who deserved or wanted what she got.⁶²

Men raped women for all sorts of reasons, competition and rivalry being among the foremost. It was all a glorious joke to get to the prized pudenda before a rival, and raping an enemy's wife or daughter was not only enjoyable but a satisfying act of revenge. Lovelace, for example, considers his assault on Clarissa a triumph over the Harlowe family. Manly, the sea-captain and protagonist in Wycherley's *Plain Dealer* (1676) plans to avenge himself on his mistress Olivia for her unfaithfulness. In these and many more instances, sexual violence is both a way of humbling and controlling women and avenging oneself on another male.⁶³ Masters, for example, assaulted their female servants as an assertion of their authority. We can't know exactly what the relationship was between master and servant in the following joke, but it exonerates the master by affirming the innate sluttishness of female servants: "A gentleman was accused for getting his maid with a child, and that he went into his maid's bed to do it: he to excuse it, swore he never went into his maid's bed, for the bed was his own."⁶⁴ Given the common view that women wanted sex but couldn't admit it, many men saw assault as a step to marriage. From looking at parish and hospital records dealing with illegitimacy Randolph Trumbach concluded that marriage actually was a possible conclusion to a courtship that began with rape

As many scholars have pointed out, these ideas were challenged by mid-century with the publication of Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748), together with the growing cult of sensibility and the emergence of the sentimental novel. While this has been well-studied, what is less well-recognized and documented is the misogyny and brutal pornography that continued unabatedly, reaching ever-widening audiences as a result of the proliferation of printed material.⁶⁵ Only by taking this

62 Ellen Pollak, *The Poetics of Sexual Myth: Gender and Ideology in the Verse of Swift and Pope* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

63 Clark, *Women's Silence, Men's Violence* (see note 57), ch. 2.

64 Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 120.

65 Scholars are conflicted about the situation of women in the eighteenth century and the level of violence against them. John Gillis and Susan Amussen argue that the relation between the sexes became less violent and more equitable. See John Gillis, *For Better, for Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* (New York: New York University Press, 1985); and Susan Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Polity, 1988). However, the following authors emphasize persisting or even increasing violence: Felicity Nussbaum, *The Brink of All We Hate: English Satires on Women, 1660–1750* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1984); Anna Clark, *Women's Silence, Men's Violence* (see note 57); Catherine Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England*. Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2003; Randolph Turnball, *Sex and*

into consideration can we understand the hostility of early reactions to Richardson's novel from women as well as men, many of whom couldn't understand why the heroine didn't gratefully accept the hand of her ravisher and be done with it.⁶⁶ At the time *Clarissa* was published (1748), few authors addressed the miseries of patriarchal culture for women or the psychological effects forced marriage and rape had on them.⁶⁷ The notion that middle and upper-class women should be free to consent or refuse a marriage proposal or that their feelings were worth considering was not a subject of serious discussion, much less debate.⁶⁸ Lady Kildare (1731–1814) considered *Clarissa* “that most stupid book,” while the Duchess of Portland (1715–1785) was “disgusted” with the “tediousness” of the story. For these women Clarissa's refusal of an arranged marriage was simply pig-headed.⁶⁹ But for all this, the disastrous effects that arranged marriages could have on couples were slowly beginning to be recognized. Hogarth's “Marriage a la Mode,” a series of six paintings (1743–1745) finished three years before the publication of *Clarissa*, depicts the marriage and gradual estrangement of a young mismatched couple that ends with the murder of the husband by the wife's lover, the death of the wife, and the sorry prospects in store for the syphilitic progeny of the ill-fated union.

Hogarth's series of pictures had the didactic intent of exposing the problems of arranged marriages in order to improve married life. This critique continued with the rise of sensibility and the sentimental novel. Gatrell suggests, however, that the more sympathetic view of women presented in sentimental fiction cre-

the Gender Revolution, vol. 1: *Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London*. The Cambridge Series on Sexuality, History, and Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Comic sources would appear to confirm a widespread acceptance of male misogyny and violence.

⁶⁶ As Dickie points out in *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 223, in comparison to Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa* were only moderate successes. Fielding was highly critical of sentimental novels and wrote *Shamela*, a spoof of *Pamela*. Smollett was also very popular and a caustic opponent of sentimentalism and much less sympathetic to women than Richardson.

⁶⁷ Frances Ferguson claims that early examples of psychological realism occurred in first-person rape narratives. Richardson's attempt to gain sympathy for Clarissa and Pamela involved a close examination of their mental states and their repeated refusal to capitulate. See Ferguson, “Rape and the Rise of the Novel,” *Representations* 20 (Fall 1987): 88–112.

⁶⁸ There were, however, women like Mary Astell (1666–1731), Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797), and Olympe de Gouges (1748–1793), as well as a number of less famous women writers, who spoke out against female oppression. See Hilda L. Smith, *Reasons's Disciples: Seventeenth-Century English Feminists* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1982); Katherine M. Rogers, *Feminism in Eighteenth Century England* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1982).

⁶⁹ Dickie, *Laughter & Cruelty* (see note 7), 222.



Fig. 6: James Gillray, “Harmony Before Matrimony” (1805)

ated an upsurge in misogyny in the second half of the eighteenth century: “Visual jokes at female expense seem to have become more voyeuristic and prurient than hitherto, their clustering and greater frequency in these years suggesting that witless woman-hatred was one of the reactions to women’s increasing cultural visibility and idealization.”⁷⁰ In satirical cartoons and jokes even marriages between consenting couples devolve into tedious domesticity that drives the husband to his club, where wine, women, and song were the order of the day and night. This is the subject of Gillray’s two contrasting prints: “Harmony Before Matrimony” of 1805 (Fig. 6), in which the raptures of the engaged couple are reflected in the cage of cooing doves, the kittens playing together, and the goldfish gazing fondly at each other. This blissful scene is in stark contrast to the situation after marriage depicted in “Matrimonial Harmonics” (Fig. 7), in which the baby cries, the cat hisses at the dog, the thermometer on the wall is at freezing

⁷⁰ Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 376. This unfortunately seems to be the case any time women’s position improves. The same backlash occurred at the end of the nineteenth century in reaction to the first wave of feminism, and it is occurring today as a result of the second wave of feminism that began in the 1970s.



Fig. 7: James Gillray, "Matrimonial-Harmonic" (1805)

point, the wife sings "Torture – rage – despair – I cannot bear," and the caged birds quarrel, all while the husband tries to read "The Sporting Calendar." Gatrell claims that only in fiction was the idea of domestic harmony presented as a reality. Clubs were the places to which upper class males escaped from female company and scrutiny. Peter Clark claims that there were some 25,000 clubs in the eighteenth-century English-speaking world, the vast majority in London. Some 20,000 men were said to have spent every evening in them, which is probably an underestimate since Clark concentrated on philosophical, scientific, and political clubs, ignoring the many less intellectual and more immediately gratifying tavern clubs with women and alcohol amply available (Fig. 8).⁷¹

⁷¹ Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 118. See Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1500–1800: The Origins of an Associational World*. Oxford Studies in Social History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).



Fig. 8: James Gillray, “The Union Club” (1801)

1.3 Scatological Humor

As one would imagine, given the literally “shitty” environment in which just about every European and Englishman lived, jokes about excrement were extremely popular.⁷² Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) records in his diary that on October 20, 1660 he stepped into a “great heap of turds” that had escaped from his neighbor’s privy into his cellar. Pepys’ experience was not unusual for urban dwellers. Before the Great Fire of London in 1666, narrow streets, cramped housing, spouting gutters without downpipes, and the practice of dumping chamber pots out of windows and onto the street made life hazardous for pedestrians. Hogarth’s engraving “Night” (1738) is a graphic reminder of this common practice (Fig. 9). Swift is a vocal witness to the excremental reality of urban life in eighteenth-century Dublin – too vocal, in fact, for many critics’ taste. John Middleton Murray

72 Allison P. Coudert, “Sewers, Cesspools, and Privies: Waste as Reality and Metaphor in Pre-modern European Cities,” *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 4 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 713–33.



Fig. 9: William Hogarth, “Night, The Four Times of Day” (1738)

(1889–1957), for example, excoriated Swift for his “excremental vision,” a vision that led the Hungarian psychoanalyst Sándor Ferenczi (1873–1957) to declare Swift a neurotic with “an inhibition of normal potency” (1926).⁷³ Such diagnoses ignore the fact that Swift lived his adult life near St. Patrick’s Cathedral in the oldest, poorest, and lowest part of Dublin known as “The Liberties.” This improv-

⁷³ This diagnosis is taken several steps further by Karpman when he described Swift as “a neurotic who exhibited psychosexual infantilism, with a particular showing of coprophilia, associated with misogyny, misanthropy, mysophylia, and mysophobia.” Cited in Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), 182.

erished area was subject to frequent flooding from the river Liffey and from the open sewer near the Cathedral that arose from the underground river known as the Poddle. Excrement and filth were an unavoidable part of Swift's everyday existence. As he says of Dublin city streets, "every person who walks the streets must needs observe the immense number of human excrements at the doors and steps of waste houses, and at the sides of every dead wall."⁷⁴ In "A Description of a City Shower," he catalogs the detritus routinely flooding his neighborhood: "Filths of all hues and odours ... Sweepings from butchers' stalls, dung, guts, and blood./ Drowned puppies, stinking sprats, all drenched in mud,/ Dead cats and turniptops come tumbling down the flood." To comprehend fully the unavoidable relevance of excrement in every eighteenth-century individual's daily life, one has also to remember that a basic tenet of medical theory and practice involved the analysis of an individual's urine and feces. As the famous chemist Jan Baptista van Helmont (1580–1644) wrote in a couplet worthy of Swift: "Excrementitious dung and urine piss / is of physicians the chief, dainty dish."⁷⁵ Excrement was an augury predicting what was to come as well as a ubiquitous reality.

Personal hygiene, much less modesty, was difficult to sustain in environments like this that lacked the physical infrastructure to deal with waste. Casanova was shocked to find that "when an Englishman wants to ease his sluices in the street he doesn't turn up an alley or turn to the wall," but instead turned "towards the middle of the street where they are seen by everybody who is driving in a carriage."⁷⁶ London was not alone, however, in getting bad press for its appalling filth. Describing his travels through France and Italy in 1766, Smollett reveals a similar disgust at the excrement that accosted his senses in public places. He singled out Rome and its Piazza Navona for special opprobrium. Goethe registered the same distress on his travels through Italy when he noted the way locals defecated and urinated in public places.⁷⁷ But from his antics with Herr

74 This description comes from Swift's satirical pamphlet "An Examination of Certain Abuses, Corruptions and Enormities in the City of Dublin" (1732), and while it is an accurate picture of Dublin's excremental landscape, Swift uses excrement as a metaphor for the atrocities committed on the Irish by the British. See Sophie Gee, "The Sewers: Ordure, Effluence, and Excess in the Eighteenth Century," *A Concise Companion to the Restoration and Eighteenth Century*, ed. Cynthia Wall. Blackwell Concise Companions to Literature and Culture (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2005), 101–20.

75 Jan Baptista van Helmont, *Oriatrike or, Physick Refined...*, trans. John Chandler (London: L. Lloyd, 1662), 875.

76 Cited in Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 180.

77 Tobias Smollett, *Travels Through France and Italy* (1766), Letter xxx, February 23, 1765, *The Miscellaneous Works of Tobias Smollett: Complete in One Volume* (London: Henry Washbourne,

Glaser's portrait, we know that Goethe was not quite the lofty figure he came to be thought of in his old age. While he charmed people, he also alarmed them with his sudden fits of anger and especially by his foul and scatological language. He denounced those who exasperated him as "shitheads," and the best-remembered line from his first play *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773) is the robber baron Götz shouting to the emperor's messenger: "Tell his Imperial Majesty that he can lick my arse," a phrase that became known as "The Swabian Salute."⁷⁸ It may come as less of a surprise that Mozart set to music his own extended version of this salute, which begins with the following three lines,

Lick my ass nicely,
lick it nice and clean,
nice and clean, lick my ass.⁷⁹

Between 1720–1750 there was a small "boom" in "excretion-obsessed pamphlets in England activated by Swift's scatology in *Gulliver's Travels* and other writings. This diminished after this point, although it carried on in prints as one can see from James Gillray's "The French Invasion; or John Bull, bombarding the Bum-Bats" (Fig. 10). Chamber pots with Napoleon's head inside were also popular in England during the Napoleonic wars. As Gatrell remarks, "Clearly things could be said in images that in texts were tabooed."⁸⁰ He surmises that this might have been the result of a growth in female readership and the emergence of new ideal of polite behavior. In the second half of the eighteenth century decorum was increasingly inculcated by arousing shame, disgust, and embarrassment. This apparently worked because we don't have prints of Queen Victoria farting or encounter references to farting in Victorian high-brow literature. But it would be incorrect to say that scatological humor died out. Presumably it never will since it has existed across all times and cultures and, following

1841), 760 "The noble Piazza Navona is adorned with three or four fountains, one of which is perhaps the most magnificent in Europe, and all of them discharge vast streams of water: but, notwithstanding this provision, the piazza is almost as dirty as West Smithfield, where the cattle are sold in London. The corridors, arcades, and even staircases of their most elegant palaces, are depositories of nastiness, and indeed in summer smell as strong as spirit of harts-horn." J. W. Goethe, *Italian Journey (1786–1788)*, trans. W. H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 62, 64.

⁷⁸ Sanfranski, *Goethe* (see note 4), 178. The Swabian salute comes in Act 3, scene 3.

⁷⁹ "Leck mich im Arsch" (literally "Lick me in the arse") is a canon in B flat major composed by Mozart ostensibly for some friends, probably in Vienna in 1782. The modern German curse is: "Du kannst mich doch mal am Arsch lecken!"

⁸⁰ Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 187.

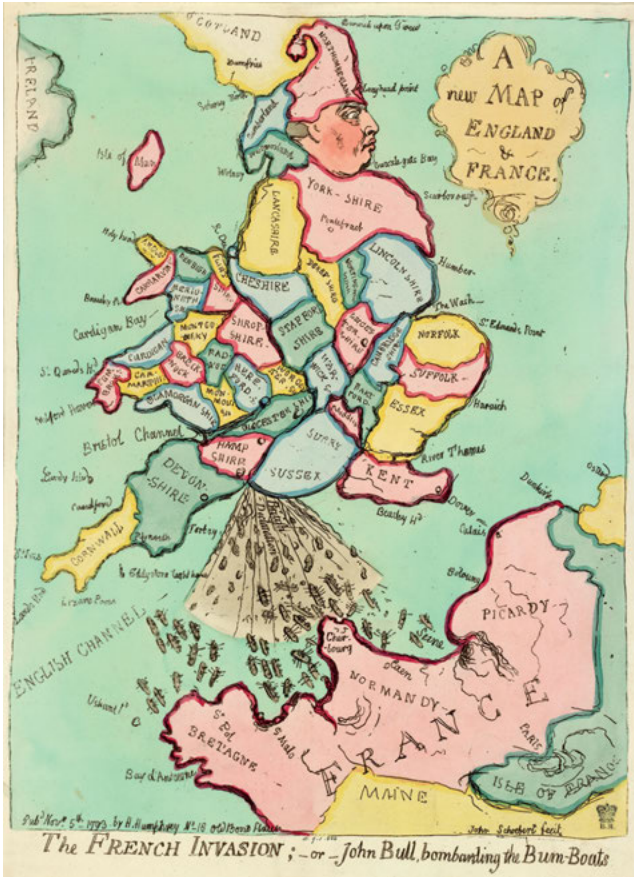


Fig. 10: James Gillray, “The French Invasion, or John Bull, bombarding the Bum-bats” (1793)

Freud and a great many other psychologists, represents a rebellion against the shame inspired by social taboos. As Mikhail Bakhtin argued, this kind of humor had been part of carnivalesque culture for centuries.⁸¹ It allowed individuals to escape at least momentarily from the hierarchy norms and strictures of everyday life. While this is true, as Ronald Hutton has pointed out festivals of misrule usually confirmed hierarchical norms, and these rituals had been controlled and reshaped by those in power for centuries: “Far from surviving from

⁸¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (1965; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009).

an antique past, they were endlessly reinvented.”⁸² Hutton describes the steps taken by Reformers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to reform and curtail these traditions. However, there were carnivalesque survivals in the provinces into the early nineteenth century, and lavatory humor continued to appear in the recycled jokes in jestbooks. It certainly remained a favorite topic of laughter among males. Charles James Fox (1749–1806), for example, wrote an *Essay upon Wind* in 1783 that had nothing to do with meteorology. But in general, scatological humor made itself less obvious by moving largely out of polite society into more private spaces.⁸³

2 Explaining Eighteenth-Century Humor

Having described major themes in eighteenth-century humor, the question confronts us as to why so much of it was malicious. According to those who made these jokes, they only did so at the expense of people who pretend to be something they weren't. As Fielding says in the preface to *Joseph Andrews*, “... when Ugliness aims at the Applause of Beauty, or Lameness endeavors to display Agility; it is then that these unfortunate Circumstances, which at first moved our Compassion, tend only to raise our Mirth.” Wycherley concurred, “We are pitied, while we go lame because we can't help it, but laughed at for pretending to dance, when we are obliged to hobble.”⁸⁴ Dennis, Congreve, Addison, Steele, Blackmore, Whitehead all insisted that comedy should only laugh at defects that could be corrected. But this is at best a half-truth as we know from the jokes themselves and from contemporary essays criticizing the unnecessary cruelty of certain types of contemporary humor. Dickie makes the important point that when coming to grips with the manifest cruelty of so much eighteenth-century humor, it is impossible to ignore the “staggering levels of alcohol consumption in all these clubs – gallons and gallons of port and punch and the disorder and foul language that clearly accompanied them as the evening wore on.”⁸⁵ The three-bottle-a-day man was nothing special. William Pitt the Younger, Prime Minister of England from 1783–1801 had little trouble knocking back six bottles of wine a day, which helps to explain his necrotic liver upon dissection. Samuel Johnson, the great lexicographer, wrote about his birthplace that “All the decent

⁸² Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400–1700* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 111–12.

⁸³ Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), ch. 6 “Bums, Farts and Other Transgressions.”

⁸⁴ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 58.

⁸⁵ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 33.



Fig. 11: Thomas Rowlandson, “The Brilliants” (1801)

people in Lichfield got drunk every night and were not the worse thought of.”⁸⁶ Thomas Rowlandson caricatures his own club in “The Brilliants” (Fig. 11), which depicts a group of drunk and vomiting men with empty bottles littering the floor. The rules of the club are displayed on the wall:

- 1st That each member shall fill a half pint bumper to the first toast.
- 2nd That after twenty four bumper toasts are gone round, every [member] may fill as he pleases.
- 3rd That any member refusing to comply with the above regulations to get fine[d] a bumper of salt and water.

But while obviously a contributing factor, alcohol alone cannot explain the malicious nature of the humor directed at the poor, sick, maimed, and marginal-

⁸⁶ Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 124. For Johnson’s remark see James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*. 10 vols. (London: John Murray, 1839), IV, 56.

ized. Something else was a work, and this was both the reality of human nature and the realities of every-day life. We can let Thomas Hobbes's study of laughter in his *Leviathan* (1650) deal with the first. As he says there, those who laugh are indulging in the "Sudden Glory" caused either by "some sudden act of their own, that pleaseth them; or apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves."⁸⁷ While no one likes to admit the pleasure of this kind of *Schadenfreude*, it exists to a greater or lesser degree in every human being, depending on the culture into which he or she is born. But, like alcohol, this by itself does not explain the peculiar nastiness of eighteenth-century humor. For that we have to turn to daily life.

To understand the humor of any age is difficult because it involves gaining as complete a picture as possible of the worldview and experiences of individuals living at that particular time and place. Jokes not only lay bare the social conditions and cultural mores of a society but they reveal its scientific theories and religious and aesthetic values. The eighteenth century was a period of enormous social change as the growth of commerce and industry led to the expansion of a middle class that increasingly challenged the power and authority of the older landed aristocracy. We can see this in the first scene of Hogarth's "Marriage à la Mode" (1743), in which an aristocrat with his gouty foot propped up on a footstool is selling his son in marriage to the daughter of a member of the merchant class in order to shore up his diminishing fortune and complete the Palladian mansion we see through the window behind him. It would be this growing middle class that eventually curtailed the rambunctious behavior of upper-class rowdies and helped to tone-down the salacious, scabrous humor of contemporary jokes and caricatures. But this only happened gradually toward the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. Dickie points out that before this time the general public clearly delighted to read and talk about the antics of their social superiors. Perhaps this is not so different from today's fascination with the lives of the rich and famous, whose flouting of normal standards of behavior clearly offers vicarious pleasure to those who live more conventional lives. As Dickie says of eighteenth-century consumers of popular print culture, they

were fascinated by the presumptive superiority of these riotous, irreverent young men; their freedom from labor, material necessity, and middle-class values like sobriety and thrift; their freedom to damn parsons, scoff at religion, and gamble away a fortune in a single night. ... [T]his points to a widespread fascination with the sheer entitlement of these

⁸⁷ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Pt. 1, ch. 6, "Pleasures of Sense; Pleasures of Mind; Joy, Paine, Grief." https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3207/3207-h/3207-h.htm#link2H_PART1 (last accessed on Jan. 15, 2019).

men, with their almost instinctive delight at their own superiority and good fortune, their almost unquestioned right to knock around their inferiors and do what they liked with women.⁸⁸

Dickie suggests that these upper-class “bucks” assumed the mantle of earlier folk and trickster figures, who successfully mock authority and turn the table on those in power. Such were the heroes and heroines of the so-called “rambler novels,” which were far more popular in the eighteenth century than the sentimental novels that have received far more scholarly attention.⁸⁹ But while it is certainly true that challenging conventions has great appeal, there were other, even more powerful reasons for why people living in the age of Enlightenment tolerated and engaged in behavior that most of us today would find offensive, and this has to do with the harsh realities of everyday life.

In his essay on laughter, Bergson’s claims that laughter depends on “a momentary anesthesia of the heart.”⁹⁰ Whether it came from the heart, a bottle, or from being carried away by the mob mentality of fellow pranksters, a certain amount of numbness was necessary in the early-modern period if one were to stay relatively sane in a world that continually confronted individuals with so much pain and misery and the horrifying physical conditions of a large percentage of the population, especially in growing urban areas. Montaigne describes the emotional toll witnessing other people’s pain and suffering took on him:

I would live solely in the presence of gay, healthy people. The sight of other people’s anguish causes very real anguish to me, and my feelings have often usurped the feelings of others. A continual cougher irritates my lungs and throat. I visit less willingly the sick toward whom duty directs me than those toward whom I am less attentive and concerned. I

88 Dickie, “Joseph Andrews and the Great Laughter Debate,” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 34 (2005): 271–332; here 281.

89 Dickie, “Joseph Andrews and the Great Laughter Debate” (see note 88), 285. These novels had titles like *The History of Will Rambler* (1755), *The Adventures of Dick Hazard* (1754), and *The Adventures of Jack Smart* (1756). They were popular among all classes. Lady Montagu, for example, read dozens of them. See Robert Halsband, “Lady Wortley Montagu and Eighteenth-Century Fiction,” *Philological Quarterly* 46 (January 1966): 145–56. Cf. William J. Haynes and William G. Doty, eds., *Mythical Trickster Figures* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997); Enid Welsford, *The Fool: His Social and Literary History* (New York: Farrar & Rhinehart, Inc. 1935); Peter Berger, *Redeeming Laughter: The Comic Dimensions of Human Experience* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1977).

90 Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of Comic*, trans. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (1900; Mineola, NY: Dover, 2005), 2–3.

catch the disease that I study, and lode it in me. I do not find it strange that imagination brings fevers and death to those who give it a free hand and encourage it.⁹¹

Some two centuries later in his *Sentimental Journey* Laurence Sterne evinces similar sympathy for the many deformed people he encountered on his travels, claiming how distressing it was to see

so many miserable [individuals] ... every third man a pigmy! – some by ricketty heads and hump backs – others by bandy legs – a third set arrested by the hand of Nature in the sixth or seventh years of their growth – a fourth, in their perfect and natural state, like dwarf apple trees, from the first rudiments and stamina of their existence, never meant to grown higher.⁹²

The fact that most disabilities were not congenital but acquired as a result of poor nutrition, chance accidents, common illnesses, and occupational hazards made them all the more distressing because they provided unavoidable reminders of what might happen to anyone.⁹³ Amputees were a common sight, not simply because of major injuries but often as a result of minor fractures, wounds, and the gangrene caused by infection, poor hygiene, ineffective medications, as well as the wars waged by increasingly bellicose nation states. Scurvy, smallpox, tuberculosis, and rickets were prevalent and disfiguring burns frequent. Disabled soldiers and sailors made up a large proportion of homeless vagabonds. Occupational injuries were so common they gained trade names like “baker’s legs” or “baker’s knee” to describe the knock-knees bakers commonly got from kneading bread. This disease, with a gratuitous bit of misogyny thrown

91 Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Works*, trans. Donald M. Frame (New York and London: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 1:38, 82.

92 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*, ed. Katherine Turner (London and Buffalo, NY: Broadview Press, 2010), 112. It must be said that for all the sympathy expressed in this passage, in his younger days Sterne belonged to John Hall-Stevenson’s society of “Demoniacs,” a group of men in Northern Yorkshire, who gathered together for drinking, bawdy talk, and practical jokes. Sterne tried to distance himself from this circle once he became famous, but Hall-Stevenson published a series of pamphlets describing what went on in Yorkshire. For an enlightening discussion of how humor and sex played a positive role into Sterne’s religious beliefs, see Martin C. Battestin, “A *Sentimental Journey*: Sterne’s ‘Work of Redemption,’” *Bulletin de la Société d’études anglo-américaines des VIIe et XVIIIe siècles* 38 (1994): 189–204.

93 Margaret Pelling, “Old Age, Poverty, and Disability in Early Modern Norwich,” *Life, Death and the Elderly. Historical Perspectives*, ed. Margaret Pelling and R. H. Smith (London: Routledge, 1991). Margaret Pelling, *The Common Lot: Sickness, Medical Occupations and the Urban Poor in Early Modern England*. Readers in Urban History (London and New York: Routledge, 1998). Tim Hitchcock, *Down and Out in Eighteenth-Century London* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2005).

in for good measure, led to the proverb, “A woman’s tongue and a baker’s legs, neither of them were ever straight.” Shoemakers developed hunchbacks from stooping over their work. Tailors became weak and sickly from sitting cross-legged for long hours of stitching. Blacksmiths were bleary-eyed. Braziers went deaf from hammering brass. Porters and coal distributors suffered from hernias and ruptured blood vessels and developed a stoop. Lead workers, plumbers, glaziers, and painters became increasingly paralyzed from lead poisoning. Hatters went mad from inhaling the fumes of the mercurous nitrate used to cure felt. The eyesight of seamstresses, lace makers, compositors, and watchmakers grew increasingly worse and most were blind by late middle age. These examples come from Bernardino Razzini’s (1633–1714) description of occupational diseases in his *Treatise of the Diseases of Tradesmen*, published in Latin in 1700, translated into English in 1705, and expanded throughout the century. Such diseases led to a high suicide rate among the elderly, who became an economic burden to their families.⁹⁴ As Dickie points out, “Along with the disabled street vendors and musicians, worn-out tradesmen and laborers died on street corners or froze to death in ditches. They were the anonymous, wretched victims of the consumer society so lavishly evoked by recent historians. ...”⁹⁵ In the face of all these occupational hazards, many people became fatalistic and resigned to how little could be done to prevent or alleviate these conditions.⁹⁶ Their existence became routinized in games of charades predicated on guessing which trade was being portrayed. These games existed throughout Europe. There were also card games challenging players to guess the various occupations of the tradesmen depicted according to their disability.⁹⁷

In *The Culture of Pain*, David Morris describes the close connection between laughter and tears, a point made by Montaigne in his essay, “How We Laugh and Cry for the Same Thing” and countless other authors over the centuries.⁹⁸ Although responding to suffering and deformity with laughter was not Montaigne’s

94 Michel MacDonald and Terence R. Murphy, *Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon, Press 1990); Kevin Sietta, “Suicide as an Illness Strategy in the Long Eighteenth Century,” *Histories of Suicide*, ed. John Weaver and David Wright (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

95 Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 95.

96 The eighteenth century was the age of charity, but it was selective and insufficient to cope with all the problem of the poor and wretched. Donna Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989) Nicholas Rogers, “Policing the Poor in Eighteenth-Century London: The Vagrancy Laws and Their Administration,” *Histoire sociale/Social History* 24.47 (1991): 127–47.

97 Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 96.

98 Montaigne, *Complete Works* (see note 91), 1: 38, 82.

solution, it clearly was for many people in an age when little could be done to ameliorate the situation. In the pre-modern period ugliness and disability were often associated with festivity and mirth. This was a deeply-rooted aspect of the carnival culture described by Bakhtin in his classic study *Rabelais and His World*. In the upside-down world of carnival, King Carnival was usually the ugliest man in the community, and in his trail came hunchbacks and all kinds of disabled individuals. Rabelais makes tremendous fun of boozy gout sufferers and laughing syphilitics. Georgian caricatures depict deformed people happily drinking in London taverns.⁹⁹ The positive side of this was that disabled individuals were to some extent integrated into the larger community, a practice that eroded in later centuries when, paradoxically, people had become too sensitive to bear such sights and preferred to have them locked away in institutions. As we have seen, although increasingly suppressed, carnival culture never entirely disappeared despite the fact that new forms of politeness and decorum took precedence in the late eighteenth century.¹⁰⁰ It was possible, especially among those of equal social status, to join forces and make the best of whatever deformity they shared. Such were the origins of Ned Ward's "No-Nose Club."¹⁰¹ In *Spectator* 17 (March 20, 1711), for instance, Steele suggests that those who are ugly or deformed should create a self-mocking club for "composing and quieting the Minds of Men under all corporeal Redundancies, Deficiencies and Irregularities whatsoever; and making every one sit down content in his own Carcass."¹⁰² He includes in his essay a letter from one "Alexander Carbuncle," who sets out the supposed rules for such a club. But someone like William Hay, who was deformed, was not amused and would have nothing to do with these ugly clubs, a sign in itself of the diminishing force of carnival culture.¹⁰³

Dickie claims that the "blithe" acceptance of occupational deformity coexisted with another avoidance tactic that, while it doesn't make logical sense, makes perfect psychological sense, namely "an almost willful refusal to recognize its existence."¹⁰⁴ The traditional mistrust of beggars as idle frauds was increasing in this period as their numbers increased. Fielding, for example, believed beg-

⁹⁹ Donald, *The Age of Caricature* (see note 19), 10–11.

¹⁰⁰ Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England* (see note 82); Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (note 3), 194.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, *Ye Ugly Face Clubb Leverpoole, 1743–1753: A Verbatim Reprint from the Original Manuscript*, ed. Edward Howell (Liverpool: Edward Howell, 1912).

¹⁰² <http://spectator.libraries.rutgers.edu/text/march1711/no17.html> (last accessed on Jan 15, 2019).

¹⁰³ Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 100.

¹⁰⁴ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 96.

gars' infirmities were generally faked and that good health was "the happy portion" of the poor.¹⁰⁵ This attitude continues today with the demonization of welfare recipients and the Protestant Ethic that dismisses poverty, criminality, and drug addiction as personal rather than social failings. Distinguishing between true and false beggars became a topic of great concern in the eighteenth century. In Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling* (1771), for example, a beggar tells Harley that "Lying is ... my profession."¹⁰⁶ The denial of the real hardships and physical dangers facing craft and industrial workers was compounded by the idealization of physical work that one finds in the *Encyclopédie* (1751–1772). No deformities can be seen in the famous engravings of different occupations. The workshops are spacious and orderly, unlike the garret and cellars in which most artisans actually worked. Children's books followed suit and showed prettified images of bakers and other workers to help children memorize the alphabet.¹⁰⁷

Bergson offered another explanation for why the disabled would be the subject of humor. He claims that we laugh as a result of incongruity, for instance, when an orator sneezes in the midst of a pathetic passage or a person in authority slips or stumbles. Clumsiness is funny or we would not laugh at the many games involving handicaps, such as Blindman's Bluff or one-legged and hopping races.¹⁰⁸ Mary Douglas applies the notion of incongruity to the specific case of the laughter elicited when a person behaves like an automaton: "It is funny when persons behave as if they were inanimate things. So a person caught in a repetitive routing, such as stammering or dancing after the music has stopped, is funny. Frozen posture, too rigid dignity, irrelevant mannerisms, the noble pose interrupted by urgent physical needs, all are funny for the same reason. Humour chastises insincerity, pomposity, stupidity."¹⁰⁹

While Bergson and Douglas help us understand some of the general psychological and perceptual reasons why we laugh at disability, this laughter was also, and perhaps more importantly, a consequence of religious and metaphysical assumptions about physical deformity deeply embedded in Western thought. Pre-

105 See Henry Fielding, *Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers and Related Writings*, ed. Malvin R. Zirker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 108.

106 Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*, ed. Brian Vickers. Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 16.

107 See Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

108 Bergson, *Laughter* (see note 90), 27.

109 Mary Douglas, "Jokes," *Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 93. Cf. Albrecht Classen, ed., *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, Its Meaning and Consequences*. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 8 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010).

modern Westerners tended to consider physical and mental abnormality the way their forefathers had, as signs that could be interpreted in one of two ways: either as divinely ordained aspects of nature or as signs of divine retribution meant to inspire fear, contempt, disgust, and hatred for anyone associated with such monstrosity.¹¹⁰ As Roger Lund has argued, the so-called argument from design, which was widely accepted by pre-modern Europeans, was predicated on the idea that deformity was part of the divine order as a “joke of nature.” Dwarfs, for example, were often described as “sports” of nature or “God’s little jokes.”¹¹¹ Such an idea was a legacy of Greek and Roman writers, for whom monstrosity was an encomium to natural and human diversity and a sign of divine fecundity. This was the position Pliny took in Book VII of his *Natural History*. In his *Ars Poetica* Horace considered the combination of ill-assorted parts in one figure – as in centaurs, satyrs, the Minotaur, the Sphinx – or in having one part multiplied, as in Argus and the Hydra – a source of humor: “Suppose a painter chose to put a human head on a horse’s neck, or to spread feathers of various colours over the limbs of several different creatures, or to make what in the upper part is a beautiful women tail off into a hideous fish, could you help laughing when he showed you his efforts?”¹¹² When viewed this way, deformity was in effect rationalized as something that was in itself comic. As reprehensible as we may find this view, it is a fact that in the ancient world human oddities were avidly collected and even intentionally created. Seneca claims that children were deliberately maimed: “Finding a different savagery for each, this bone breaker cuts off the arms of one, slices the sinews of another: one he twists, another he castrates.”¹¹³ Plutarch berated his contemporaries for frequenting “the monster-market, looking after people of distorted limbs and preternatural shapes, of three eyes and pointed heads. ... All of which are sights

110 Roger Lund, “Laughing at Cripples: Ridicule, Deformity and the Argument from Design,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39 (Fall 2005): 94–114. Marie-Hélène Huet, *Monstrous Imagination* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1993); Sherry C. M. Lindquist and Asa Simon Mittman, *Medieval Monsters, Terrors, Aliens, and Wonders* (New York: The Morgan Library & Museum in association with D Giles Ltd, 2018). In *Shameful Bodes: Religion and the Culture of Physical Improvement* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), Michelle Lelwica demonstrates how older ideas connecting disability to sin persist to this day in damaging ways.

111 Lund, “Laughing at Cripples” (see note 110), 92.

112 Horace, “On the Art of Poetry,” trans. E. T. Dorsch, *Aristotle, Longinus, Horace*. *Classical Literary Criticism* (London: Harmondsworth, 1965), 79.

113 Seneca, *Controversiae*, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom (Cambridge and London: Loeb Classical Library 1974), III, 423.

so loathsome, that they themselves would abhor them were they compelled often to behold them.”¹¹⁴

While deformity did elicit this kind of bemused, even benevolent, laughter, the malicious laughter this essay highlights and the violence that so often accompanied it was derived from the far stronger tradition that envisioned deformity as a consequence of evil or sin, a tradition to which Plutarch obviously subscribed. The association of deformity with evil arose from the platonic and classical tradition in which beauty, truth, and virtue formed a triad that was mirrored by its inverse, a trinity of ugliness, deceit, and immorality.¹¹⁵ The association of deformity with malignity explains why Roman law stipulated that “A father shall immediately put to death a son recently born, who is a monster, or has a form different from that of the human race.”¹¹⁶ Christianity was to some extent Janus-faced when it came to deformity, seeing it as both a “joke of nature” and a sign of malevolence. St. Augustine, for example, considered deformed humans an indication of God’s delight in variety, echoing the assertion in Isaiah 45:18 that God made nothing in vain or chaotically. Yet, he also claimed that all physical blemishes would be eradicated from the elect at the time of resurrection.¹¹⁷ The belief that heaven had no place for the deformed underlined the more powerful and enduring Christian conviction that physical abnormalities were really not jokes at all but divine punishments for sinful thoughts or actions.¹¹⁸ Both classical and Christian traditions profoundly influenced Western ideas about individuals born with physical defects and unfortunately still do.¹¹⁹ Lund describes the conflict this created in the minds of deformed individuals like William Hay and Alexander Pope, who both struggled against the association of sin with de-

114 Plutarch, “On Curiosity,” *Complete Writings*, ed. N.W. Goodwin, VII Miscellanies, 2 (New York, 1906), 437.

115 Stephen R. Turley, *Awakening Wonder: A Classical Guide to Truth, Goodness & Beauty* (Camp Hill, PA: Classical Academic Press, 2005).

116 Jerome Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 179.

117 Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. B. M. Dos (New York: Loeb Classical Library, 1950), 531.

118 The enduring nature of this tradition is stressed by Lehwica, *Shameful Bodies* (see not 110).

119 “Defects”: *Engendering the Modern Body*, ed. Helen Deutsch and Felicity Nussbaum (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000); Barry Wind, “A Foul and Pestilent Congregation”: *Images of “Freaks” in Baroque Art* (Aldershot, UK, and Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998); *Others and Outcasts in Early Modern Europe: Picturing the Social Margins*, Tom Nichols (Aldershot, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007); Dennis Todd, *Imagining Monsters: Miscreations of the Self in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1995). Mark Hallett, *The Spectacle of Difference: Graphic Satire in the Age of Hogarth* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1999).

formity while implicitly accepting it.¹²⁰ In his *Essay on Man*, for example, Pope summed up the prevailing view in a couplet:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen.

That Pope, himself a hunchbacked dwarf vilified as a monster by many of his contemporaries, wrote these lines shows how ingrained the correlation between deformity and vice was.¹²¹

The upshot of this correlation was that if people look bad, they are bad. To this day villains are frequently marked by disfigurements and disabilities. Disability conjures up the fear that makes horror fiction so terrifying. Monsters, like the one produced by Dr. Frankenstein in Mary Shelley's famous novel from 1818, are physically repulsive and threatening. They are scarred, ugly, deformed, and exceptionally large or small. They lack limbs, eyes, ears, or noses, are deaf, speech impaired, mentally subnormal, or physically or mentally ill. In an age when reading character from facial or body features was all the rage, Frankenstein's monster's appearance dooms him.¹²² Johann Caspar Lavater (1741–1801), the most prominent physiognomist of the eighteenth century, claimed “the moral best” was “the most beautiful,” while the “morally worst” was the “most deformed.”¹²³ Bram Stoker's (1835–1909) *Dracula* had the small pointed ears and arched eyebrows that Cesare Lombroso (1835–1900), the famous Italian criminologist, claimed were characteristic of criminals.¹²⁴ In all periods insults were directed at the human body. Its ugliness and diseased or deformed nature were sure signs of vice and sinfulness. We can see this in such graphic taunts of

120 Lund, “Laughing at Cripples” (see note 110).

121 Thomas Carte, one of Pope's fiercest enemies, wrote “The Blatant-Beast. A Poem” (1742), in which he tapped into the idea that deformed people could affect the imaginations of pregnant women, causing them to deliver monstrous offspring. In his poem he addressed Pope as “Distorted Elf! To Nature a Disgrace” and advised him to disappear from public view: “Horrid to view! Retire from human Sight,/ Nor with thy Figure pregnant Dames affright.” <http://spenserians.cath.vt.edu/TextRecord.php?action=GET&textsid=34134> (last accessed on Jan. 15, 2019) The title of the poem was taken from the following lines in Spencer's *Fairie Queen*, “What is the Blatant-Beast? Then he reply'd / It is a Monster bred of hellish Race. ...” Edmund Spencer, *The Fairie Queen*, 2 vols. (London: J & R Tonson, 1758), Bk V, vii, 312.

122 Chris Baldick, *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-century Writing* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1987), ch. 2.

123 John Caspar Lavater, *Essays in Physiognomy*, trans. Thoms Holcroft (1750; London: William Tegg & Co, 1878), 99.

124 Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: a European Disorder, c. 1848–1918*. *Ideas in Context*, 15 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 109–10.

“meseld-faced whore,” “pocky whore,” and “gouty-legged whore.”¹²⁵ King Lear addresses his disloyal daughter Goneril as “a plague-sore” and an “embossed carbuncle” (Act II, scene 4, lines 257–58). Richard III attributes his evil nature to his disfigurement (Act 1, i), as does Lady Anne, who compares him to “adders, spiders, toads,” calling him this “lump of foul deformity” (Act 1, ii). Up to modern times Dickie claims “body determinism” reigned. People were known by their physical features: “Sutt’ring Roger” or “blinking Sam.”¹²⁶ While it is undeniable that there were an increasing number of individuals who rejected the idea that deformity was a sign of moral depravity, even progressive Enlightenment and later thinkers passed easily from an analysis of bodily appearance to a judgment on character.¹²⁷

This attitude was ensconced in Neoclassicism. According to neoclassical aesthetics, ugliness has no place in high art. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing makes this point in his *Laocoon Treatise* (1766): “Ugliness offends our eyes, contradicts the taste we have for order and harmony, and awakens aversion irrespective of the actual existence of the object in which we perceive it.”¹²⁸ In her insightful discussion of Lessing’s aesthetic theory, Barbara Stafford argues that by setting clear boundaries between the beautiful and the ugly, neoclassical aesthetics created an unbridgeable divide between art and caricature: “Lessing’s ban on the hideous, disgusting, and ugly in a painting effectively transferred conventionally repulsive and disfiguring experiences to the domain of caricature.”¹²⁹ Stafford also cites Samuel Johnson, who took a similar position in *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), when he relegated the ugly to the domain of the ridiculous as “something to be laughed at,” a judgment all the more revealing because Johnson himself was a very ugly man. But while they might be laughable, on

¹²⁵ Jonathan Healey, “The Foulest Place of Mine Arse is Fairer than They Face.” <https://the-socialhistorian.wordpress.com/2016/07/21/the-foulest-place-of-mine-arse-is-fairer-than-thy-face/> (last accessed on Jan. 15, 2019). Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early-Modern London*. Oxford Studies in Social History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), ch. 3 “The Language of Insult.”

¹²⁶ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 103.

¹²⁷ See Leah Hochman, *The Ugliness of Moses Mendelssohn: Aesthetics, Religion, and Morality in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014). In “A Foul and Pestilent Congregation” Barry Wind argues that a more sympathetic attitude toward deformity emerged in the eighteenth century and correlates this with the decline of court culture.

¹²⁸ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, trans. with introduction and notes by Edward Allen McCormick (1766; Baltimore, MD, and London: The John Hopkins Press, 1984), 126.

¹²⁹ Barbara Maria Stafford, *Body Criticism: Imagining the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 1991), 180.

a deeper level the ugly and monstrous were profoundly threatening; they might be us or we them. In Stafford's words,

The monster incarnated illegitimacy. Its anamorphic shapelessness situated it not within the culture but beyond culture, beyond the imposition of geometrical norms. It presented the distorted portrait of the primal universe as deregulated *ars combinatoria*, an immense chaos. ... It continually reminded the beholder of his active need and responsibility to make sense of the world.¹³⁰

Michel Foucault pointed out that implicit in the very concept "monster" is the injunction that it must be shown since the noun comes from the Latin verb "monstrare" (to show).¹³¹ According to the Christian providential view of history, monsters and prodigies were created by God to reveal the results of folly, vice, and unreason. They were sent by a didactic, punitive God as a warning.¹³² Though thoroughly Christian, this idea long predated Christianity. It was common practice in the ancient world for priests to interpret natural events as signs of good or bad fortune. This was the job of Roman augers, who sought to understand the divine will regarding any proposed course of action by diagnosing the flight of birds as auspicious or inauspicious. Luther took the same approach when he explained the birth of the so-called "monk-calf" as a divine warning about the corruption of Rome.¹³³ In all these cases abnormality was a sign that something was deeply wrong, and this applies not only to individual bodies but to the body politic as well. As a result of rebellion and discord the body political was believed to become diseased, misshapen, deformed, and monstrous. All this helps to explain why monstrosity has been such a persistent theme in literature even in an age of Enlightenment.¹³⁴

130 Stafford, *Body Criticism* (see note 129), 256.

131 Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 68–70.

132 Philip Soergel, *Wondrous in His Saints: Propaganda for the Catholic Reformation in Bavaria* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).

133 Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, "Unnatural Conceptions: Studies of Monsters in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France and England," *Past & Present* 92.1 (August 1981), 20–54; Jennifer Spinks, *Monstrous Births and Visual Culture in Sixteenth-Century Germany*. Religious Cultures in the Early Modern World, 5 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009).

134 Baldick, *In Frankenstein's Shadow* (see note 122), 16.

3 The Decline of Malicious Humor

The final issue that needs to be addressed is why the malicious humor I have described began to die out at the end of the eighteenth century and virtually disappeared from the public sphere by 1830. A major reason mentioned earlier is the rise of sensibility and the sentimental novel. There is clearly truth in this, although Dickie is right to point out how complicated the idea of sympathy is because it can so easily mask unpleasant motives and actions: "... if there is anything we have learned from two decades' work on sentimentality, it is just how complex, contradictory, and self-deceiving even the simplest expression of sympathy can be. Sympathy cloaks all manner of less admissible impulses."¹³⁵ Although a devoted proponent of sympathy and its beneficial effects, Adam Smith (1723–1790) was fully aware of the darker aspects of human nature when it comes to sympathetic responses: "There is in human nature a servility which inclines us to adore our superiors, and an inhumanity which disposes us to ... trample underfoot our inferiors."¹³⁶ Along with many others, Smith pointed out the difficulty people had sympathizing with the plight of those unlike themselves. And it is certainly true that many people at the time gave charity to get rid of the innumerable deformed and disabled men, women, and children who inhabited every corner of public space.

But for all this, as Gatrell points out, a watershed was reached in the history of English humor in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The bawdy, carnivalesque of the old laughter was replaced by a tamer and more domesticated humor. When William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863) reviewed John Leech's genial prints for *Punch* in 1854, he described them as having been "washed, combed, clothed, and taught good manners."¹³⁷ The writer Andrew Lang commented on "the decline of humour" and wondered if there was "any profound psychological truth ... to be gathered from consideration of the fact that humour has gone out with cruelty?"¹³⁸ Many others commented on the radical change in manners that had occurred in the first half of the nineteenth century. Henry Angelo claimed that "In no period of our domestic history has so universal a change in the manners and habits of the people generally taken place as within the last half-century." Francis Place believed English society had changed for the

¹³⁵ Dickie, *Cruelty & Laughter* (see note 7), 81.

¹³⁶ Adam Smith, *Letters on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, ed. John M. Lothian (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1963), 120.

¹³⁷ Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 417–18.

¹³⁸ Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 418.

better during his lifetime.¹³⁹ His writings extend to 41 volumes, 6 of which were entitled “Relating to manners and morals, 18th and 19th centuries.” These volumes contain notes on the “grossness” of eighteenth-century books and street songs, on the prevalence of drunkenness, begging, and crime, and the “improvement” that occurred later. Place was a champion of progress. His goal was to show that “instead of mankind growing worse and worse they grow better and better and that the wisdom of our ancestors may be too highly prized.”¹⁴⁰ He was not religious and attributed these improvements to the people themselves as a result of the rise of political societies, reading clubs, Sunday schools, new teaching methods, and the police.

Some say we have refined away all our simplicity and have become artificial, hypocritical and upon the whole worse than we were half a century ago. This is a common belief, but it is a false one, we are a much better people now than we were then, better instructed, more sincere and kind hearted, less gross and brutal, and have fewer of the concomitant vices of a less civilized state.¹⁴¹

Place’s views were limited to his own experience and trade circles and did not take into account either those who were really poor or aristocratic libertines. But Place himself represented the new earnestness and humorlessness characteristic of many members of the middle classes.

The eighteenth century was a transitional age in this move away from malicious humor toward a kinder, gentler, more amiable kind of levity. We can follow this change in terms of the jokes about disability and women, and it comes out clearly in the almost total disappearance of scatological humor from the public sphere. Pre-modern fears and superstitions were being replaced by scientific study. Marvels and curiosities were increasingly seen as pathologies or natural “wonders” that in many cases were removed from the religious into the medical realm. Lennard Davis claims that the eighteenth century invented disability and began the development of institutional and medical structures to segregate and “fix” the disabled.¹⁴² The idea that disabilities might be “fixed” encouraged people to see disability as a condition and not a defining aspect of an individual’s character and identity that merited ridicule or worse. We begin to see in literary texts and art idealized, even heroic, representations of deformed figures, for example Fielding’s Amelia in his eponymous novel of 1751, Eugenia in Burney’s *Ca-*

¹³⁹ Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 419.

¹⁴⁰ Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 582.

¹⁴¹ Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 582.

¹⁴² Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body* (New York: Verso, 1995).

milla (1796), Walter Scott's *Black Dwarf* in the novel of the same name (1816), crippled Mrs. Smith in Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (1817), and Victor Hugo's moving portrait of Quasimodo in the *Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831), along with a host of sympathetic, disabled children. These characters earned the sympathetic reaction of readers. While all this is true, David M. Turner follows the lead of other scholars in the burgeoning field of disability studies and cautions against imposing an "evolutionary theory of disability."¹⁴³ Religious explanations of disability continued to appear, but among moderate clergymen, social reformers, and the disabled themselves there was a shift away from the belief that individual or parental sin was the cause of disability to the notion that disability provided a test of faith which could bring the impaired closer to God. This was a claim made by William Hay in *Deformity: An Essay* (1754), in which he describes his experiences as a hunchback.

Hay's essay was groundbreaking inasmuch as he was one of a small but growing number of individuals living with disabilities who were willing to talk about their conditions and the effects they had on them. Hay's essay is essentially an *apologia pro vita sua*, in which he comes close to suggesting what is broadly accepted today, namely that physical deformity is not a natural or divinely ordained state indicative of character or ability, but a construct devised by society as a mirror image of what society deems normal, proper, and fitting. He begins his essay by telling readers that he wrote it so they might experience what it is like to be disabled:

Bodily Deformity is visible to every Eye; but the Effects of it are known to very few; intimately known to none but those, who feel them; and they generally are not inclined to reveal them. As therefore I am furnished with the necessary Materials, I will treat this uncommon Subject at large: and to view it in a philosophical Light is a Speculation which may be useful to Persons so oddly (I will not say unhappily) distinguished; and perhaps not unentertaining to others."¹⁴⁴

Hay repudiates Francis Bacon's essay "Of Deformity," expressing strong disagreement with the connection Bacon draws between physical deformity and vengeful character, and he contests Bacon's assertion that deformed individuals are "void of Natural Affection."¹⁴⁵ He admits that being despised, ridiculed, and

¹⁴³ David M. Turner, *Disability in Eighteenth-Century England: Imagining Physical Impairment*. Routledge Studies in Modern British History (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 147.

¹⁴⁴ William Hay, *Deformity* (see note 15), 2.

¹⁴⁵ *The Essays, or Councils, civil and moral of Sir Francis Bacon* (London: Printed for H. Herringman, et al, 1696), 117–18. Bacon's essays were written and revised over a period of twenty-eight years.

badly treated might lead some individuals to lack sympathy for those around them but claims that such treatment had broadened his sympathies to such a point that he could not countenance cruelty to animals or bear the sight of man's inhumanity to his fellow men. The "spectacle" of a boxing match "shocked" him.¹⁴⁶

Scholars of disability have suggested that Hay's authority on the subject of disability encouraged his audience to empathize with his experiences and to give disability a new meaning that could potentially be positive, even beautiful. While his essay may have had this effect on some people, Turner is not convinced this was necessarily the case. He describes the difficulty males like Hay faced in a patriarchal society in which any kind of impairment threatened the ideals of male mastery, independence, and control. He offers the example of Swift, who claimed in a letter to a friend that in spite of his lameness, he was pleased that "they tell me I do not limp." As Turner explains, males "worried that 'lame-ness' made them excessively reliant on servants or transformed them from a position of masterly command to infantile dependence."¹⁴⁷ Consequently, the fear of showing weakness conditioned the way eighteenth-century men wrote about their disabilities. The trick was to discuss them but with good humor combined with manly stoicism. Those who didn't do this, like Pope, were excoriated for their anti-social behavior, and, like Pope, condemned for their distasteful "irritability."¹⁴⁸

Hay was not the only one to give a personal account of disability in a way that engaged rather than enraged the sympathy of readers. Mary Wortley Montague (1689–1762) wrote movingly about aging, and in "Saturday" she describes the shattering effect of losing one's beauty overnight as a result of contracting small pox.¹⁴⁹ Joshua Reynolds' self-portraits show the increasingly debilitating effects of deafness and poor eyesight. But while sympathy for the disabled and disfigured increased to the point that many people, especially from the middle classes, found laughing at them a sign of poor taste, this did not necessarily improve their lot. In many cases it paradoxically worsened it because the growing sympathy for the poor, the deformed, and the disabled inaugurated a movement to remove them from the view of a newly sensitized public by incarcerating them in institutions. This was the purpose of the so-called "Ugly Laws," which were passed in reaction to the sheer number of disabled and deformed individ-

¹⁴⁶ Hay, *Deformity* (see note 15), 51.

¹⁴⁷ Turner, *Disability in Eighteenth-Century England* (see note 143), 111.

¹⁴⁸ Turner, *Disability in Eighteenth-Century England* (see note 143), 120.

¹⁴⁹ Mary Wortley Montague, "Saturday: Small Pox," *Town Eclogues* (London: M. Cooper, 1747), 32–37.

uals ensconced in public spaces, numbers that only increased with urbanization, industrialization, and warfare between emerging nation states.¹⁵⁰ The rationale behind such laws was that what was out of sight was out of mind. While a theoretically valid assumption, it could not work; there were simply too many marginalized individuals to institutionalize.

As for misogynistic humor, that too abated. As his novel gained in popularity, Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748) ensured that the topic of sexual violence gained public attention. For all their sado-eroticism, sentimental rape plots announced a new willingness on the part of authors and readers alike to believe and even admire female emotions and question misogynistic ideas about women's carnal, deceitful, and irrational nature. In fiction, the tears of rape victims now worked as positive signs of moral superiority. Enlightenment assertions about the moral and intellectual equality of men and women and campaigns for the reformation of male manners and manners in general also contributed to a more egalitarian view of the sexes. In doctrine, if not so much in practice, women were gradually being recognized as legal subjects with a right to control their own bodies. But it has to be admitted that with each step forward for women came a backlash.¹⁵¹

While humor is a given of human nature and society, it is ephemeral in the way it manifests itself. With this in mind, it is important to be aware of how political and social developments during the first third of the nineteenth century fostered the turn to a more amiable kind of humor. The rise of new sensibilities and a new evangelical pietism, together with the cultural presence and idealization of wives and mothers as "Angels in the House,"¹⁵² put a negative spotlight on the kind of raucous male behavior previously tolerated. By the time of the Reform Act of 1832, England had recovered from the worsening economic conditions accompanying the Napoleonic wars. With the death of Napoleon and the end of the hated Regency period (1811–1820) the world seemed suddenly changed. While ennui and confusion affected a large section of the intelligentsia, reform was promoted by others, and "improvement" became a watchword of the

150 Susan M. Schweik, *The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2009).

151 The status of women improved in the early half of the nineteenth century to the point that the century has been dubbed "The Age of Women." But as Peter Gay has pointed out, "No century depicted woman as vampire, as castrator, as killer, so consistently, so programmatically, and so nakedly as the nineteenth." Peter Gay, *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*. Vol. 1: *Education of the Senses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 207.

152 "The Angel in the House" was one of the most popular poems published in the nineteenth century. It was written by Coventry Patmore and first published in 1854 but constantly expanded until 1862. It summed up an age-old male fantasy of the perfect wife and mother as silent, subservient, and obedient.

times.¹⁵³ Controls on dissenters' rights were withdrawn, and the Reform Act expanded urban male franchise. These developments were reflected in the growing political optimism that went along with the increasing prosperity and confidence of middle-ranking people. The growing middle-classes wanted respectability, virtue, and progress, ideals inconsistent with the kind of malicious humor indulged in by earlier generations. By 1785 the idea of "respectability" had come to include the interiorized virtue of "politeness."¹⁵⁴ The upwardly mobile middle classes set themselves off against both lower-class rowdies and libertine aristocrats. This explains their embrace of evangelical values, repudiation of hedonism, emphasis on monogamy, and attack on obscenity. With growing consumer power, London's cultural stranglehold gave way to greater influence from the more religious and culturally conservative provinces. Byron's departure from England in 1816, largely on account of his scandalous sex life, was symptomatic of the upsurge in prudery that would grow in Victorian England (Fig. 12).

The refashioning of London was an additional factor in determining what was now considered acceptable humor. As Gatrell points out, "By the 1820s, London was itself beginning to be washed, combed, clothed and taught good manners. This induced a new sense of separation among its people."¹⁵⁵ Streets were being widened, bridges built, old houses demolished. Regent's Street provided an actual and symbolic separation between the fashionable and polite West End and the more disreputable old city.

There was still plenty of sex, vice, and violence, but voices critical of all three became stronger. The execratory and phallic aspects of much eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century humor went underground. Such humor never entirely disappeared, but it was no longer thought proper for public consumption and certainly not for display in the windows of print shops as it had been when Place was a boy. Literary satire, a mainstay of authors from Pope and Swift to Byron and Shelley, virtually disappeared. Thackeray, for example, found *Gulliver's Travels* too crass to read.¹⁵⁶

153 Allison P. Coudert, "Space, Time, and Identity: Giovanni Battista Piranesi and the Epidemic of *Ennui* in the Pre-modern West," *Travel, Time, and Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 22 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 647–96.

154 Gatrell distinguishes this movement from the earlier embracing of "politeness" by the eighteenth-century cultural elite. Politeness was just that, elite; it embraced an outward display of genteel grace, not the kind of inward transformation expected of respectability. Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 579–80.

155 Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 586.

156 Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (see note 3), 420–31.



Fig. 12: George Cruikshank, "Fare Thee Well" (1816)

Many historians have pointed out the darker side of what came to be Victorian morality: its prudery, self-righteousness, and zeal to enact reforms by pathologizing the behavior of those who failed to conform.¹⁵⁷ This is what led Foucault to claim that the Enlightenment was an age of confinement and repression, not reason, toleration, and enlightenment.¹⁵⁸ But whatever we may think of these developments, they have indelibly marked us all. The kind of teasing that Goethe thought a source of great merriment no longer seems innocent or playful and would land Goethe in jail today, not in the warm bed provided by his forgiving host. The conviction that one's social inferiors are incapable of fine feelings and insensitive to the degrading, often violent jokes aimed at them is no longer assumed by most people. Misogyny will never disappear, alas, but the limits as to what can be said or done to women in public became increasingly restricted. The disabled may not be treated with the compassion many consider desirable, but they now have organizations and voices speaking for them.

On a personal level, I can say with considerable relief that not one of my male students, undergraduate or graduate, or male colleagues has demanded that I race around the Davis quad with another female faculty member of a certain age. But these positive developments have come at the price paid by the many individuals from the eighteenth century onward who have found themselves institutionalized for exhibiting physical and mental conditions tolerated, though laughed at, in earlier centuries.

157 Georges Canguilhem, *On the Normal and the Pathological*, trans. Carolyn R. Fawcett (1943; rev. 1968; Dorrecht and Boston: R. Reidel Publishing Company, 1978). Canguilhem describes the radical new ways that health and disease were described in the early nineteenth century and how modern biology and medicine reflect larger cultural views.

158 Foucault, *Madness and Civilization* (see note 131). For a critique of this claim, see Gary Gutting, "Foucault and the History of Madness," *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 47–70 and Roy Porter, *Madmen: A Social History of Madhouses, Mad Doctors and Lunatics* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus, 2004), 20–23.

Melvyn Lloyd Draper

Enjoying the Waters: Cross-Class Leisure and Pleasure at the Eighteenth Century British Spa

In the summer of 1720 Daniel Defoe arrived at the thriving English spa town of Tunbridge Wells. “I found a great deal of good company there,” he noted in his travelogue, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*:

and that which was more particular, was, that it happen'd to be at the time when his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was there with abundance of the nobility, and gentry of the country, who to honour the prince's coming, or satisfy their own curiosity, throng'd to that place; so that at first I found it very difficult to get a lodging.¹

Defoe's portrait of Tunbridge Wells, one of the most popular English therapeutic leisure resorts in the mid eighteenth century, provides a snapshot of the peculiar conjunction of health, leisure, and pleasure among the upper classes during the golden era of spa culture in Britain. This was the zenith of what R. B. Mowat termed “the age of watering-places,” when, from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, spa towns proliferated across England, Wales and Scotland.² What began as a socially exclusive embrace of the purported healing properties of spring waters by royalty and courtiers, however, soon evolved into a booming economy of health-orientated, commercial culture. This was just one expression of the broader commercial revolution that catapulted Britain from an agrarian to urban and industrial society.³ But in the spa resorts another feature of British modernity

1 Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1962), 126.

2 R. B. Mowat, *England in the Eighteenth Century* (London: G. G. Harrap & Co., 1932), quoted from *Spas in Britain and in France in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Annick Cossic and Patrick Galliou (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), xiv.

3 On the English “consumer revolution” see Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Europa Publications 1982); Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660–1760* (London: Routledge, 1988); Maxine Berg, *Luxury & Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Two surveys of the period are Julian Hoppitt, *A Land of Liberty?: England 1689–1727*. New Oxford History of England (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 2000), chapters 10 and 13; see also Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: Eng-*

was also revealed as the mingling of old and new elites taking the waters exemplified the wider transition taking place from an aristocratic to a bourgeois social order.⁴

It is the purpose of this paper to reflect on the role that these spa towns played in the construction of what would become a transmuted form of elite sociability. The ongoing patronage of the British watering places by eighteenth century elites highlights aristocratic reluctance to cede power and authority in an urbanizing and transforming world. By blending body and beauty in a pageant of therapeutic and invigorating sociability they were able to perpetuate a glamor that continued to enchant their social inferiors. Yet, while attendance at the spas helped maintain the pervasive cultural hegemony of the patrician elite as their personal physicians encouraged the lords and ladies to partake of the waters, over time the spa resorts were increasingly defined by, and catered for, the urban middle classes. Ostensibly centers of health and hygiene, these commercial watering places came to function as venues for a cross-class enactment of embodied leisure and pleasure, a heterotopic space in which two different cultures, patrician and bourgeois, converged.⁵ What was produced, as a result, was the shaping of a new, elite leisure culture: middle class, but imbued with vestigial practices of the pleasure-seeking upper classes. And, underpinning all this, was the therapeutic rationality emanating from a new, professionalizing medical orthodoxy.⁶

The fusion of health with leisure and pleasure during the “long eighteenth century” was, in large measure, a product of the transition from the feudal culture of the old landed elites to one defined by the new, individualist, modern

land 1727–1783. New Oxford History of England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), particularly chapter 2.

⁴ Following Perry Anderson in “Origins of the Present Crisis,” *New Left Review* 1.23 (January–February, 1964): 26–25. I use aristocracy here as an admittedly problematic catchall for the broad upper tier of the British social elite, ranging from the ancient landed nobility to the squierarchy and gentry.

⁵ Heterotopia, meaning another space or place of difference, is used here to frame the spa as a transitory, transactional location for cross-class cultural exchange. See Michel Foucault, “Des Espaces Autres” (Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias), *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* 5 (October, 1984): 46–49; translated by Jay Miskowiec in *Diacritics* 16.1 (Spring, 1986): 22–27.

⁶ See Dorothy Porter and Roy Porter, *Patient’s Progress: Doctors and Doctoring in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1989), especially part III. On medical professionalization since 1800, see Noel Parry and José Parry, *The Rise of the Medical Profession: A Study of Collective Mobility* (London: Croom Helm, 1976). Also, Christopher Lawrence, *Medicine in the Making of Modern Britain, 1700–1920*. Historical Connections (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

consumer self.⁷ Concurrently, the mysteries of the body were increasingly being revealed by a burgeoning, Enlightenment-imbued scientific medicine. It is not a coincidence that a new acceptance of the medicinal properties of hot springs and mineral waters coincided with the onset of early secularization and the scientific turn.⁸ As Phyllis Hembry explained in her history of the English spas:

the use of prescribed waters for medicines, as distinct from religious, reasons now acquired an aura of respectability, even of high fashion. Traditional habits of taking the waters could not be eradicated, but they were brought under control and given a new guise with emphasis on their medicinal qualities, as confirmed by scientific analysis.⁹

What Hembry identified is the historical shift from clerical to secular conceptions of healing and, significantly, the association of a culture of healing with glamor and prestige. From the early eighteenth century on, taking the waters would be simultaneously a therapeutic, commercial, and a social enterprise, while at its center lay the impulse toward pleasure.

Pleasure itself was the product of Enlightenment culture, argues Roy Porter, arising out of Enlightenment philosophy and the proto sciences of humankind where a “new hedonism” arose with:

its new accent upon the legitimacy of pleasure – not as occasional release, aristocratic paganism or heavenly bliss, but as the routine entitlement of people at large to seek fulfill-

⁷ For a comprehensive treatment of the development of the notion of the individual, see Jerrold Seigel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe since the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). In an English context, see Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

⁸ For a recent examination of the debates surrounding the actuality of an early modern scientific revolution, see David Wootton, *The Invention of Science: A New History of the Scientific Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 2015).

⁹ Phyllis Hembry, *The English Spa, 1560–1815: A Social History* (London: The Athlone Press, 1990), 5–11. Another example of the shifting attitudes toward water therapy as scientifically legitimate was the appearance in the 1790s of an entire system of medicine predicated on a variant of water cure, Samuel Hahnemann (1755–1843)’s homeopathy. See Martin Gumpert, *Samuel Hahnemann: Rebellerischer Arzt und Begründer der Homöopathie* (1949; Constance: Südverlag, 2018); Robert Jütte, *Samuel Hahnemann: Begründer der Homöopathie* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2005); Elizabeth Danciger, *Homeopathy: From Alchemy to Medicine* (Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 1987); Alice Ann Kuzniar, *The Birth of Homeopathy out of the Spirit of Romanticism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).

ment in this world rather than in heavenly salvation, to achieve the gratification of the senses not just the purification of the soul.¹⁰

This was a rational conception of pleasure and, while essentially bourgeois, contained within it a lingering aristocratic embrace of sensory and bodily pleasure. Contemporaries were evidently predisposed to this “new hedonism,” as can be seen in David Hume’s assessment that “reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.”¹¹ Bentham’s utilitarianism was the cogent expression of this, the understanding that human propensity for pleasure and avoidance of pain governed rational self-interest. The new hedonist, however, Porter asserts, “was not the aristocratic rake ‘writ large,’ but the man or woman of sensibility who could pursue satisfaction through sociable behaviour, and whose altruism and benevolence gave pleasure.”¹²

In the spa towns during the long eighteenth century the contours of pleasure were determined by the political and social elites, but gradually elements of the middling orders were able to partake of the waters alongside their social superiors, indulging in the fusion of leisure and pleasure derived from the curative and social exchanges taking place at pump and assembly rooms. Thus, as we can see from reading Jane Austen and the novels of other contemporary European authors, the eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of an increasingly widespread therapeutic spa culture that was immensely attractive to the traditional upper classes but also, significantly, to those with aspirations of joining their ranks. It is important to qualify this by reminding ourselves that therapeutic leisure was never entirely an eighteenth-century nor an elite phenomenon.¹³ As Peter Burke has argued in an overview of the scholarly debates on leisure, the misleading binary of pre-industrial and industrial, between an older, popular “festival culture” and new, bourgeois “leisure culture” – the latter as a product of modernization – obscures many of the continuities that contributed to the new

10 Roy Porter, “Enlightenment and Pleasure,” *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Roy Porter and Marie Mulvey Roberts. Themes in Focus (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 1–19.

11 David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* Book 2, Part 3, Section 3 (London: John Noon, 1739).

12 Roy Porter, “Enlightenment and Pleasure” (see note 10), 18.

13 The revival of bathing at Italian thermal springs in the thirteenth century was, initially, for sociable rather than therapeutic reasons. See Thomas G. Benedek, “The Role of Therapeutic Bathing in the Sixteenth Century and Its Contemporary Scientific Explanations,” *Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene in Medieval and Early Modern Literature: Explorations of Textual Presentations of Filth and Water*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 19 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 528–67.

bourgeois leisure regime that flourished in the eighteenth century, of which spa resorts were a spectacular part.¹⁴

Certainly older forms of popular leisure were stamped out or rendered more appropriate according to the sensibilities of the middle classes.¹⁵ In the flux and change of the eighteenth century the traditional association of landed wealth and the aristocratic leisure class became a marker and vehicle of social change that slowly opened up an expanding vista of leisure to millions more Britons, despite middle class inhibitions about participating in aristocratic extravagance and excess.¹⁶

According to Porter, this was both directed by, and driven for, the burgeoning consumer society. One of the signal features of this was the middle class embrace of display amidst the commercialization of leisure. This was an adoption and adaptation of aristocratic values, while eschewing the dissolute immorality associated with the old elites. Thus, a fusion of old and new elite culture was visible in the activities associated with leisure and the ideals of what constituted pleasure that emerged in the crucible of eighteenth century water cure. The pageant of promenade and display so prevalent at the spa resorts reinforced social hierarchy while seeming to undercut it, demonstrating, as Porter asserted, that “if not an end in itself, leisure was essential for the parade of patrician eminence and dignity.” In this way, the popularity of taking the waters can be seen as a pursuit of leisure and pleasure that was deeply rooted in status group behavior. At the spa towns the modern, individuated self bathed, imbibed, and paraded in dialogue with the social strictures and tolerated transgressions of an increasingly

¹⁴ Peter Burke, “The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe,” *Past & Present* 146 (February, 1995): 136–50. A compelling argument for the enduring nature of popular leisure practices in the long eighteenth century can be found in J. M. Golby and A. W. Purdue, *The Civilisation of the Crowd: Popular Culture in England, 1750–1900* (London: Batsford, 1984). On fifteenth century spa culture, see Albrecht Classen, “A Slow Paradigm Shift: Late Fifteenth-Century Travel Literature and the Perception of the World: The Case of Hans von Waltheym (ca. 1422–1479),” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 42 (2017): 1–21; and especially his Introduction to *Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene* (see note 13), 1–87.

¹⁵ Still the most incisive scholarly treatment of bourgeois sensibility and its relationship to the consumer society is G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

¹⁶ On the creation of a nineteenth century understanding of this, see Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study in the Evolution of Institutions* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899). This seminal study has been republished and translated numerous times.

middle-class society that was in the process of reshaping the contours of conduct.¹⁷

Balneology or, water cure, has a long history, both on the European continent at places such as Spa in Liège, Belgium, and the numerous German “Bad” towns, as well as in Britain.¹⁸ The mineral hot springs of what would become the town of Bath, for example, had been an ancient religious site dating back at least to the Iron Age, where a Brythonic shrine to the goddess Sullis was later appropriated by the Romans, who established the town of Aquae Sullis there as a religious center dedicated to Minerva.¹⁹ This association of mineral waters with divine healing continued in the post-Roman era with the popular use of wells and springs, although in Britain the visitation and veneration of these waters was generally discouraged by the Church. This all changed, argues Phyllis Hembry, in the late sixteenth century when, during what she terms the “Elizabethan transformation,” British spa centers began to grow in popularity among the ruling elites. Longstanding popular practices of well and spring gathering had been formally banned by Henry VIII owing, ironically, given the Church’s views on the subject, to the association of well waters with Catholicism. However, subsequent religious and political tensions and fears of wealthy recusant Catholics going abroad to partake of Continental spas in the Spanish Netherlands – and invariably associate with fellow Catholics beyond the immediate gaze of the Tudor state – led Elizabeth to ease the prohibition. As a result, a new secular approach to bathing and drinking waters was cultivated. This was in part due to this shift in state policy, but also due to the professionalization

17 Roy Porter, “Material Pleasures in the Consumer Society,” *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Porter and Roberts (see note 10), 19–35.

18 J. Wechsberg, *The Lost World of the Great Spas* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979). Albrecht Classen, “Introduction: Bathing, Health Care, Medicine, and Water in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age,” *Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene*, ed. Classen and Sandidge (see note 13), 1–87. Curiously, the revival of water cure in France coincided with the Elizabethan spa boom. See L. W. B. Brockliss, “The Development of the Spa in Seventeenth-Century France,” *Medical History*, Supplement 10 (1990): 23–47. Also, Jill Steward, “The Role of Inland Spas as Sites of Transnational Cultural Exchange in the Production of European Leisure Culture (1750–1870),” *Leisure Cultures in Urban Europe, c.1700–1870: A Transnational Perspective*, ed. Peter Borsay and Jan Hein Furnée (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 234–60.

19 According to Ptolemy in book 2, chapter 2 of his second century *Geographia*, “Aquae Calidae,” or site of hot water was one of three town occupied by the Brythonic Belgae. This appears to have been what would later become Bath. Claudius Ptolemy, *The Geography*, trans. and ed. Edward Luther Stevenson (London: Dover, 1991).

of medicine, starting in 1518.²⁰ Thus, by the late 1570s there was, Hembry notes, “a mania for well-finding” that the “government could not ignore.” Crucially, the superstitious use of wells was still prohibited, only those “of creditable medical worth” were approved.²¹

Displacing the older supernatural and miraculous associations of sacred wells is significant as clerics from the dissolved religious houses and lay physicians joined together to advance medical knowledge in England, thereby underpinning the nascent spa craze with a medical gloss. This is important because what Hembry identifies is the concurrent relaxing of proscriptions on visiting springs and wells for healing and their frequenting by the upper classes, the emergence of a new medical profession, and the development of the modern English state. It was this blend that contributed to the English spa boom, and, directing aristocratic resort predilections, were the medical figures who grew in prestige and authority from this point on. In this context new medical authorities began to publish tracts advocating the therapeutic virtues of spring waters. The first balneological treatise in English, according to Charles Mullett, was Dr. William Turner’s (ca.1509–1568) disquisition on baths in 1562. This was followed ten years later by two works written by a Dr. John Jones concerning the waters at Buxton, the earliest known print reference to waters other than those of Bath.²² The cohering, discursive influence of the new science on the fledgling medical profession and its application in water cure found emphatic expression toward the end of the century when Dr. Tobias Venner (1577–1600) provided the most comprehensive analysis then of the baths at Bath, describing the four public baths and the leper bath. Intriguingly, Venner took exception to the commercialization of the waters at Bath, and the attendant presence of medical men likely to bring the field into disrepute, exclaiming that “it were to be wished, that em-

²⁰ The founding of the College of Physicians in London in 1518 allowed it to take control from the Church of licensing its members. This represented the beginning of a self-defining medical profession in Britain. See Margaret Pelling and Charles Webster, “Medical Practitioners,” *Health, Medicine and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Charles Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 165–235; Elizabeth Jane Furdell, *The Royal Doctors, 1485–1714: Medical Personnel at the Tudor and Stuart Courts* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2001), 17–44; Louella Vaughan, *Grave and Learned Men: The Physicians, 1518–1660* (London: Royal College of Physicians, 2017).

²¹ Hembry, *The English Spa* (see note 9), 15.

²² Charles F. Mullett, *Public Baths and Health in England, 16th–18th Century*. Supplements to the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 5 (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1946), 3–4.

piricks, and all others being not graduates in the faculty of physick were utterly prohibited to practicse in the city.”²³

Venner’s hopes were in vain, and over the succeeding two hundred years Bath was commercialized and medicalized to such an extent that the town, which expanded around the ancient waters, would eventually become a model for ensuing resort urbanization across Britain. Yet even before Bath enjoyed its position as the fashionable water place, it was preceded by the first purposely conceived spa resort, that visited by Defoe at Tunbridge. Indeed, neither Defoe’s accommodation travails, nor the presence of so many illustrious members of the British elite, were in the least unusual for Tunbridge Wells. The town had gradually developed into a spa resort following the discovery of a chalybeate mineral spring in a local woodland in 1606 by Stuart courtier Dudley, 3rd Baron North, who was staying in the vicinity for recuperative purposes. The startlingly rapid recovery North experienced after drinking from the waters led to his introducing the Queen, Henrietta Maria, and a bevy of other court figures to the spring. With its proximity to London, and relatively accessible road connections, Tunbridge Wells soon became the preferred watering spot for generations of the well-heeled from the capital, who encamped near the spring.

Over the course of the next century these royal and aristocratic visitors ensured that the well thrived. Beginning in the 1630s a small group of permanent buildings had been erected for the comfort of the visitors to the waters and the outline of a planned urban area took shape.²⁴ This was an entirely new form of urbanization in Britain, what might be described as resort urbanization and, as scholars have noted, constituted one of the many overlapping trajectories of the new urbanism that accelerated in Britain following the Wars of the Three Kingdoms.²⁵ The transformation of the spring at Tunbridge into a permanent spa retreat from the 1680s onward meant that the vibrant new town that grew up to cater to the needs of its visitors ensured that Tunbridge Wells, for a time, superseded Bath as the preeminent water cure destination in England.

The development of the resort town was in no small measure a consequence of the political stability following the Restoration and the “Glorious Revolution”

23 Tobias Venner, *The Baths of Bathe* (London: Moore, 1628), quoted in Mullett, *Public Baths* (see note 22), 6. On the Tudor medicinal use of spring waters, see Jean Dietz Moss, “The Promotion of Bath Waters by Physicians in the Renaissance,” *Rhetoric and Medicine in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Nancy S. Struener and Stephen Pender. Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012).

24 Thomas Bengel Burr, *The History of Tunbridge Wells* (London: M. Hingeston, 1766).

25 On new urbanism, see Christopher Chalklin, *The Rise of the English Town, 1650–1850*. New Studies in Economic and Social History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

of 1688, subsidized by the increased flow of capital arriving into the economy from English imperial ventures that stimulated urban expansion across the nation.²⁶ The impact of this flow of liquidity into England during the eighteenth-century has been well documented, but in the context of the spa towns there remains much work to be done.²⁷ What is clear, as Peter Borsay has shown, was that the spas and seaside leisure resorts that proliferated after 1700 were a separate but related analogue to the new towns of the early industrial revolution. As he suggests, “because of their newness and distinctive profile, spa and seaside centers provide a litmus test of the urban transformation unfolding in the long eighteenth century.”²⁸ The commercial viability of the minor spa resorts that flourished, then faded, from the late sixteenth century onward was never on the scale of the two most successful, Bath or Buxton. However, they were evidence of a new social habit that blended leisure, pleasure and health within this new urbanizing context. There, as Hembry demonstrates, “a philosophy and a regime for the water cure” was established “under noble patronage and with guidance from leading physicians.”²⁹ The development of resort urbanization was, then, from the outset a combination of therapeutic and recreational conviviality by which the social elites could physically relocate and temporarily trans-

26 John Harold Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England, 1675–1725* (London: Penguin Books, 1967). For a focused, provincial look at the relationship of empire to the English urban boom see Kenneth Morgan, “Building British Atlantic Port Cities: Bristol and Liverpool in the Eighteenth Century,” *Building the British Atlantic World: Spaces, Places, and Material Culture, 1600–1850*, ed. Daniel Maudlin & Bernard L. Herman. H. Eugene and Lillian Youngs Lehman Series (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 212–28.

27 On the crucial importance of English Atlantic World commerce to post-Restoration metropolitan prosperity, see Nuala Zahedieh, *The Capital and the Colonies: London and the Atlantic Economy 1660–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Also, Perry Gauci, *The Politics of Trade: The Overseas Merchant in State and Society, 1660–1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). The unsurpassed examination of new urbanism beyond the metropolis remains Peter Borsay’s *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660–1770*. Oxford Studies in Social History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). See also Penelope J. Corfield, *The Impact of English Towns, 1700–1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); Jon Stobart, Andrew Hann & Victoria Morgan, *Spaces of Consumption: Leisure and Shopping in the English Town, c.1680–1830* (London: Routledge, 2007); Joyce Ellis, *The Georgian Town 1680–1840*. Social History in Perspective (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).

28 Peter Borsay, “Health and Leisure Resorts, 1700–1840,” *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, ed. Peter Clark. Vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 775–805.

29 Hembry, *The English Spa* (see note 9), 20. Her research into English watering places identified the establishment of sixteen spas in the late sixteenth century, but it was only after the Restoration that the water cure phenomenon began, with thirty-nine spas created in the period 1660–1699, and a further thirty-four between 1700–1749.

plant themselves, their power and prestige, along with their desire for diversion away from their traditional loci of court and country. In doing so, however, they ventured into a spatial encounter with contenders for social dominance in the shape of the urban middle classes and gentry.

The dual function of the spa resort as both center for healing and a site of leisure and pleasure was satirized by an unnamed letter writer who described the peculiar scene he encountered when visiting Tunbridge to take the waters in the mid-1770s: "One should imagine an hospital the last spot in the world to which those in pursuit of pleasure would think of resorting," the author wryly opined. "However, so it is; and, by this means, the company here furnish out a tragi-comedy of the most singular kind. While some are literally dying, others are expiring in metaphor; and in one scene you are presented with the real, and in another with the fantastical, pains of mankind." The duality of the spa at Tunbridge as simultaneously a place of amusement and convalescence was viewed as performance. Indeed, the writer explicates this theatrical character of the spa resort:

An ignorant spectator might be apt to suspect that each part was endeavouring to qualify itself for acting in their opposite character: for the infirm cannot labour more earnestly to recover the strength they have lost than the robust to destroy that which they possess. Thus the diseased pass not more anxious nights in their beds than the healthy at the hazard tables; and I frequently see a game at quadrille occasion as severe disquietudes as a fit of the gout.³⁰

The spa thus served as a venue for what John Brewer has termed the "social performance," where "self-presentation in the cultural arena was a vital means of maintaining or attaining social status and establishing social distinctions."³¹ Yet, at the same time, the inversion of the logic of leisure, pleasure and healing satirized by the writer above is also redolent of the topsy-turvy blurring of identities and apparent subverting of social order found in the masquerade, which, Terry Castle argues, constituted "the paradigmatic scene of transgression" for many commentators and satirists in eighteenth century society.³²

³⁰ Anonymous, *The Complete Letter-Writer, Containing Familiar Letters on the Most Commons Occasions in Life* (Edinburgh: W. Darling, 1778), Letter XVIII, 42–43.

³¹ John Brewer, "'The Most Polite Age & the Most Vicious.' Attitudes Towards Culture As A Commodity, 1660–1800," *The Consumption of Culture 1600–1800: Image, Object, Text*, ed. Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (London: Routledge, 1995), 341–62.

³² Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986).

What made the masquerades so appealing to patrons – and so disturbing to the guardians of decency and good conduct – was the delineated and bounded setting in which heterodox behaviors and a temporary flight from the constraints of the social order could be acted out. But an equally significant feature of the masquerades was that, alongside the pleasure gardens such as at Ranelagh and Vauxhall, and despite the pretense of exclusivity, they served as another venue for cross-class social interactions to complement that of the spa town. For some observers the transgressive confounding of social roles and identities was as much a feature of the spa as it was the masquerade. This is apparent from the description of Tunbridge provided by an anonymous author in 1714 who observed that: “The Sons and Daughters of Fortune thrive here so mightily, it is hard to know the Lady from the Jilt, of the Lord from the Sharper; all higglede pigglede mix one among another, like Skulls in a Charnel-house, or Knaves and Cuckolds at my Lord-Mayor’s Show.”³³

This blurring and crossing of class and gender roles remained a matter of concern for contemporaries throughout the century but for our purposes it helps illuminate the overlapping and interconnecting nature of aristocratic and bourgeois behavior as it was mediated in the social spaces of the eighteenth century public sphere. Thus, at Vauxhall gardens, according to Jonathan Conlin, “by the 1780s it was a commonplace to view the mingling of ranks ... as a positive indication of the social and constitutional health of Britain relative to other states,” so that by 1820, he argues, “the Vauxhall crowd was a spectacle of cohesion rather than confusion.”³⁴

Cohesion defined the urban spa resorts long before the 1820s when, according to Hembry, the spa towns began to suffer a noticeable decline as the seaside resorts and accessible Continental spas increasingly attracted their elite English patrons.³⁵ Before this, however, the cohering of interests from all social groups who converged on the spa towns can be evinced as far back as 1684 when speculators in Tunbridge began constructing new lodgings and recreations for the elite patrons taking the waters. The Upper Walk, rebuilt in 1687 after a fire, was re-made with a colonnade and covered shops for the sale of consumer goods, including toys, silver, millinery, china, souvenirs. This was a deliberate

33 Anonymous, “A Letter from Tunbridge to a Friend in London; Being A Character of the Wells, & Company There,” *The Tunbridge & Bath Miscellany For the Year 1714* (London: Edmund Curl, 1714).

34 Jonathan Conlin, “Vauxhall Revisited: The Afterlife of a London Pleasure Garden, 1770–1859,” *Journal of British Studies* 45.4 (October 2006): 718–43

35 Phyllis Hembry, *British Spas from 1815 to the Present: A Social History* (London: The Athlone Press, 1997).

and planned urban regeneration, a response to the growth of consumer society in which the pecuniary incentives offered by the secular craze for healing waters and the array of ancillary services surrounding the baths encouraged greater investment, leading in turn to the development of spa towns as some of the nation's foremost urban commercial centers. Thus, the spa resorts as part of the wider urbanizing impulse also produced a social coherence among those with a mutual interest in encouraging urban development.

Entrepreneurial investment by local dignitaries and businessmen drove the growth that occurred at Tunbridge and catalyzed the commercial boom for watering places. A different but socially related interest group directed the evolution of Bath where its municipal corporation invested in schemes to transform the town into a therapeutic destination. Despite its ancient origins as a water cure center, as a spa resort Bath took longer to prosper than other towns, partly due to poor infrastructure, especially the roads, and partly due to the lack of outside investment as at Tunbridge. Still, as Hembry has shown, from the 1670s there was a marked increase in investment in Bath. New building work comprised a large part of this as cellars and new commercial enterprises including bookshops and coffee houses were in operation by 1690. Nevertheless, it wasn't until the early decades of the eighteenth century that the iconic Palladian architectural imprint of John Wood provided Bath with the characteristic urban face that set it apart as the premier spa destination.³⁶

The increasing popularity of spa towns from the end of the seventeenth century on put pressure on lodgings and services, the results of which were to create an unprecedented degree of social mixing and informality.³⁷ This social proximity of the classes – particularly the mixing of aristocracy and the middling element – is clearly evident in Christopher Anstey's satirical *New Bath Guide*. First published in 1766, we are given a glimpse of the emergence of not only the increasingly affluent and class aware middling orders, but a corresponding consumer culture of leisure and pleasure catering to polite society in general. In letter five, "Salutations of Bath, and an adventure of Mr. B_N_R_D's in consequence thereof," Anstey's cartoonish gentleman, Simkin, writes to his mother describing his impressions of the town. To Simkin's delight, on his arrival the town musicians appeared outside his lodgings and began playing. Oblivious to the sensibilities of the other tenants, Simkin and his companion proceeded to

³⁶ See Timothy Mowl & Brian Earnshaw, *John Wood: Architect of Obsession* (Bath: Millstream Books, 1988); Kirsten Elliot, *The Myth-Maker: John Wood 1704–1754* (Bath: Akeman Press, 2004).

³⁷ Hembry, *The English Spa* (see note 9), 82.

dance around their rooms to the music, aggravating their fellow guests in the process:

But the lodgers were shock'd such a noise we should make,
And the ladies declar'd that we kept them awake;
Lord RINGBONE, who lay in the parlour below,
On account of the gout he had got in his toe,
Began on a sudden to curse and to swear:
I protest, my dear mother, t'was shocking to hear
The oaths of that reprobate gouty old peer
So while they were playing their musical airs,
And I was just dancing the hay round the chairs,
He roar'd to his Frenchman to kick them down stairs.
The Frenchman came forth with his outlandish lingo,
Just the same as a monkey, and made all the men go;
I could not make out what he said, not a word,
And his lordship declar'd I was very absurd.

Says I, "Master RINGBONE, I've nothing to fear.
"Tho' you be a Lord, and your man a MOUNSEER,
"For the may'r and the aldermen bad them come here:
"— As absurd as I am
"I don't care a damn
"For you, nor your *valee de sbam*:
For a Lord, do you see,
"Is nothing to me,
"Any more than a flea;
"And your Frenchman so eager,
"With all his soup meagre,
"Is no more than a mouse,
"Or a bug, or a louse,
"And I'll do as I please while I stay in the house:
"For the B-R-N-R-D family all can afford
"To part with their money as free as a Lord."³⁸

Anstey's satire captures not only the insolence of the well-to-do middling orders when thrust into what had hitherto been a space dominated by Simkin's social superiors, represented by Lord Rathbone, it also illustrates the chauvinism toward England's old nemesis across the Channel. Anstey's *New Bath Guide* after all was published in the context of the century of global conflict with

38 Christopher Anstey, *The New Bath Guide* (London: Dodsley, 1766), 35.

France that Linda Colley has shown helped define the identity of Great Britain.³⁹ The self-confidence of the middling-orders is apparent in this satire, as is clear in Simkin's resolution:

So I thank'd the musicians, and gave them a guinea,
Tho' the ladies and gentlemen call'd me a ninny;
And I'll give them another the next time they play,
For men of good fortune encourage, they say,
All arts and all sciences too in their way.⁴⁰

As this satire intimates, the obligations of patronage were shifting away from the gouty old aristocrats to the enterprising and entrepreneurial middle classes, men of good fortune in more ways than one, whose prosperity was demonstrated in their support for the arts and sciences.

A similar indicator of the growing influence and presence of the middle classes as arbiters of leisure and pleasure was the appearance of the Master of Ceremonies as the orchestrating figure in early eighteenth century spa towns. Preceding Defoe's travelogue by ten years, the first volume of Scottish writer and spy John Macky's *A Journey Through England* was issued in 1714.⁴¹ Macky's depiction of Bath and the important part played by Richard 'Beau' Nash (1674–1761), the town's Master of Ceremonies, in orchestrating conduct as well as effecting introductions, further illustrates the growing cultural authority of the middling orders. Nash, Macky wrote:

is not of any Birth, nor Estate, but by a good Address and Assurance ingratiates himself please adjust it all into the Graces of the Ladies, and the best Company in the Place, and is Director of all their Parties of Pleasure. He wears good Cloaths, is always affluent of Money, plays very much; and whatever he may get in private, yet in publick he always seems to lose. The Town have been for many Years so sensible of the Service he does them that they ring the Bells generally at his Arrival in Town, and, it's thought, pay him a yearly Contribution for his support.⁴²

A dandy and impresario with a gift for marketing and promotion, Nash was very much the self-assertive, urban middle-class gentleman, and it is noteworthy that

³⁹ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

⁴⁰ Christopher Anstey, *The New Bath Guide* (see note 38), 35.

⁴¹ The second volume, in part a rejoinder to Henri Misson's *Observations Through England* (first published in French in 1698 and in English in 1719), was delayed until 1722.

⁴² John Macky, *A Journey Through England, in Familiar Letters From a Gentleman Here, to his Friend Abroad* (London: J. Hooke, and T. Caldecott, 1714), Letter VIII, 127–36; here 128.

the rise of Bath as the preeminent Georgian spa town occurred at the hands of an enterprising, commercially-minded commoner. A sketch of Nash, written anonymously by his close friend Dr. William Oliver (1695–1764) on the occasion of his death on February 13, 1761, described him as “by birth a gentleman, an ancient Briton; by education, a student of Jesus College, in Oxford; by profession –. His natural genius was too volatile for any. He tried the army and the law, but soon found his mind superior to both.” Dr. Oliver, himself a leading figure in the Bath medical community, had published on the use of the waters for gout and was instrumental, along with Nash and other influential patrons, in the creation and operation of the Royal Mineral Water Hospital in 1738 to serve the needs of the sick poor who congregated in the town. As physician and deputy president of the hospital, and with a private practice that catered to many of the local gentry, Oliver became a prominent figure in Bath and his association with Nash exemplifies the interconnectedness of health, leisure and pleasure in the evolution of the spa towns.⁴³

Nash, with his predilection for pleasure, particularly affaires d’amour, had very quickly discovered that neither military nor legal careers offered the possibilities for a life of leisure and amusement, but his incomparable abilities in cultivating pleasure, as a successful gambler and organizer of pageants, steered him toward greater opportunities in Bath where he arrived in 1705. There was certainly an element of fortune in his timing. The corporation had recently changed the season so as not to compete with the then more fashionable resort of Tunbridge Wells. They also extended the season in Bath with a view to making it more profitable and thus more enticing.⁴⁴ Even more fortuitous for Nash, the visit of Queen Anne to the town in 1702 was of profound importance in Bath’s ascent, coinciding as it did with the municipal efforts to capitalize on the ancient mineral waters, as was the death in 1704 of Nash’s predecessor, one Captain Webster, as organizer of entertainments in the town. Anne visited Bath four times in total before her death in 1707 (as Princess Anne in 1688 and 1692 and once more as Queen in 1703), and Stuart patronage of the town appealed to courtiers and aspiring middle classes alike. Through his adroit sense of display and presentation Nash was able to transcend the limitations of his middle-class background to in-

⁴³ See Anne Borsay, “Oliver, William (1695–1764),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online). Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-20736> (last accessed on Feb. 1, 2019).

⁴⁴ Hembry, *The English Spa* (see note 9), 92.

sert himself into the heart of Bath society, assuming the role of Master of Ceremonies in 1706.⁴⁵

An illuminating paragraph in Oliver's sketch further emphasizes how Nash exemplified the new men that Anstey would draw on for his parody of Simkin. In Oliver's view, Nash "was born to govern." However, "his dominion," unlike that of "other legislators," was not to be "over the servility of the vulgar, but over the pride of the noble, and the opulent." Here, Oliver clearly articulates one of the standout features of the age, the gradual supplanting of the old elite by the new, middling men. Nash was able to maneuver himself into this position precisely because, Oliver enthused, "His public character was great, as it was self-built, and self-maintained; his private amiable, as it was grateful, beneficent, and generous."⁴⁶

The connection between health, leisure, and pleasure and the crucial role all three played in the new consumer society and Bath's every-increasing prosperity is apparent from the various rituals and diversions available to the town's visitors. John Macky provides an illustrative description of a typical day for those partaking of the waters:

In the Morning, early the Company of both Sexes meet at the Pump, in a great Hall inrailed, to drink the Waters; and saunter about till Prayer-time, or divert themselves by looking on those that are bathing in the Bath. Most of the Company go to Church in the Morning in Dishabillee, and then go home to dress for the Walks before Dinner. The Walks are behind the Church, spacious and well shaded, planted round with Shops filled with every thing that contributes Pleasure; and at the End, a noble room for Gaming; from whence there are Hanging-Stairs to a pretty Garden, for every body that pays for the Time they stay, to walk in.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ In many respects, Nash can be viewed in the context of a new, synthetic masculinity, one embracing both old and new notions of manliness that developed in the eighteenth century. See Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660–1800*. Women and Men in History (New York: Pearson Education, 2000).

⁴⁶ Oliver's panegyric, originally a pamphlet published in Bath by John Keene in 1761, is included in the earliest biography of Nash, written by the celebrated Irish author Oliver Goldsmith, *The Life of Richard Nash, of Bath, Esq; Master of the Ceremonies at Bath. Extracted Principally From His Original Papers* (Dublin: Dillon Chamberlaine, 1762), 182–87. An attempt to provide a fuller picture of Nash and Georgian Bath was provided by Lewis Melville, pen name for Lewis S. Benjamin, in his *Bath under Beau Nash* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1907). A more recent treatment of Nash and his role in establishing Bath as eighteenth-century Britain's pleasure capital is John Eglin's, *The Imaginary Autocrat: Beau Nash and the Invention of Bath* (London: Profile Books Ltd., 2005).

⁴⁷ Macky, *A Journey Through England* (see note 41), 128–29.

The amusements and diversions on offer to those visiting Bath constitute a proto-modern form of middle-class sociability and encompass many of the features later associated with nineteenth century bourgeois culture: piety, moderation, self-improvement. But there are glimpses too of practices inherited from the aristocracy, not least the recreational enjoyment derived from observing, spectating, and display. The voyeuristic viewing of bathers in *déshabillé* hints at the tacit prurient motives for spending the season at a spa resort and highlights the persistence of aristocratic conduct and behavior norms where surface propriety and decorum obscured the publicly suppressed thrill derived from illicit encounters with the body of another.

Sex and sociability at the spa was inextricably connected to promenading and display. An anonymous writer in the *Tunbridge & Bath Miscellany for the Year 1714* began his letter to a London friend by explaining that rather than visiting the town for curative reasons he was attending instead as a spectator, remarking that: “You are sensible the Reasons that induc’d me to make my Appearance at this general Rendezvouz, Tunbridge, were neither the Air nor the Waters, but purely the Curiosity of seeing the People and the Place.” There was nothing out of the ordinary in this for, as the author recounted, “The chief Diversion at the Wells is to stare one at another; and he or she that is best dress’d, is the greatest Subject of the Morning’s Tittle-tattle.” The superficiality of this entire social performance was acerbically lampooned by the author who commented that “The chiefest Complement among Women is, *I hope the Waters pass well with your Ladyship*; Which is, in plain English, I hope, Madam, you piss well.”⁴⁸

For many spa attendees, however, the promenading and display often had specific objectives beyond being present and being seen. The season functioned as a de facto marriage market for the sons and daughters of society families and the ritualized set of behaviors to this end at Bath was vividly depicted by Austen in *Northanger Abbey*. Her heroine, Catherine Morland, discovered that: “every morning bought its regular duties: shops were to be visited; some new part of the town to be looked at: and the Pump-room to be attended, where they paraded up and down for an hour, looking at everybody and speaking to no one.” But this was an elaborate perambulation and prelude to securing a potential match. During a visit to the lower Assembly Rooms the real reason for the complex performance of social obligations became apparent once “the master of the ceremo-

48 Anonymous, “A Letter from Tunbridge to a Friend in London” (see note 33).

nies introduced to her a very gentlemanlike young man,” Henry Tilney, as a dancing partner.⁴⁹

The brokering of a good match evidently remained one of the responsibilities of the spa master of ceremonies a century after Nash had taken it upon himself to introduce eligible young men and women. But there were other motivations than securing a match for those who took the waters and participated in the pageantry of display. At Tunbridge Wells Defoe noted how “the ladies that appear here, are indeed the glory of the place,” yet “the coming to the Wells to drink the water is a meer matter of custom; some drink, more do not, and few drink physically.” Rather, Defoe explains, “company and diversion is in short the main business of the place; and those people who have nothing to do any where else, seem to be the only people who have any thing to do at Tunbridge.”⁵⁰ Here Defoe reinforces the association of spa visiting with the leisured class, those without occupation in search of such, drinking of the waters of sociability as much as the literal waters of the mineral spring. The presence of the women visitors, “the glory of the place,” filling their cups with “company and diversion,” emphasizes the underlying sexual impetus behind the popularity of the spa town, but this was not necessarily directed simply toward marriage.

Performing elite womanhood was inextricably linked to the theatricality of the resort, and Defoe offers further insight into the concentration on female display at the spa:

After the appearance is over at the Wells, (where the ladies are all undress'd) and at the chapel, the company go home; and as if it was another species of people, or a collection from another place, you are surpriz'd to see the walks covered with ladies compleatly dress'd and gay to profusion; where rich cloths, jewels, and beauty not to be set out by (but infinitely above) ornament, dazzles the eyes from one end of the range to the other.⁵¹

This promenading occupied a substantial portion of the visit to the spa, but the ruse of hiding sexual motives behind a therapeutic justification for taking the waters can be seen as far back as 1697 when the frequenting of the spa by women in good health, often accompanying invalid men, was seized upon by commentators such as John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester, in his satirical poem “Tunbridge Wells.” Here Wilmot’s characters Cuff and Kick promenade with the noble intention of assisting women to conceive:

⁴⁹ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*. Rpt. (1803; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), chapter 3, 17.

⁵⁰ Defoe, *Tour Through the Whole Island*, Letter II (see note 1), 126.

⁵¹ Defoe, *Tour Through the Whole Island*, Letter II (see note 1), 126.

For here walk, Cuff and Kick
 With brawny Back and legs and potent prick,
 Who more substantially will cure thy Wife,
 And to her half Dead Womb restore new Life.⁵²

In Wilmot's portrayal, the spa town was not merely a performance space where health, pleasure and leisure intersected, in some cases providing opportunities for brokering marriages, the resort also offered the possibility for less respectable assignations, dalliances, and remedies for maladies untreatable by physicians. Before Wilmot, the *Memoirs of Count Philibert du Grammont* floridly detailed the recuperative benefits of a visit to Tunbridge Wells, no doubt due to the array of entertainments on offer with "high stakes and love-making in abundance."⁵³

Following the end of the Napoleonic Wars, British watering places faced increasing competition from Continental spas that were once again available to wealthy Britons. In addition they also had to contend with the growing attraction of a new destination for leisure, pleasure, and health, the seaside resort. Thirty-four of these resorts appeared by the early nineteenth century, at such places as Whitby, Brighton, and Weymouth, where they offered a range of leisure activities, including an invigorating regimen of restorative sea bathing. This popular new therapeutic destination appealed to water-cure adherents and diverted significant numbers of patrons from the spas to the seashore.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, several newer British spa towns prospered, Cheltenham and Leamington Spa becoming the models for a smaller, more parochial spa town. In part, this was due to the changing demands of the spa users. To meet the requirement for different types of baths, hot, warm, and cold, new "spa centers" were built. By 1816 the city of Bath only possessed the one "spa center." In contrast, Leamington, whose impressive Upper Assembly Rooms opened in September 1812, had seven, while Cheltenham had eight. The clientele at these more intimate and provincial resorts were also more demanding, and the informal rituals of the water places were reinforced. As Hembry reveals, the patrons in the small spas expected "the daily social round now customary in spas," which included "early morn-

⁵² John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, "Satire LIII, Tunbridge Wells," *The Complete Poems of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester*, ed. David M. Vieth (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 79.

⁵³ Count Anthony Hamilton, *Memoirs of the Count de Grammont, Containing the History of the English Court Under Charles* (London: H. G. Bohn, 1846). Originally in French, 1713. In Mullett, *Public Baths* (see note 22), 17.

⁵⁴ John K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A Social History 1750–1914* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1983); Louise Allen, *The Georgian Seaside: The English Resorts Before the Railway Age* (self-published, 2016).

ing bathing and drinking of the waters, followed by an airing on the parades; then riding and driving, tea-drinking and card-playing; and an evening ball at least once a week.⁵⁵

By the early nineteenth century the old aristocratic patrons of the spa towns were becoming noticeably less present, their absence filled by local gentry, supplemented by civic and municipal notables from the middle classes. In his *The Spas of England, and Principal Sea-Bathing Places*, Granville contrasted the relatively sparse elite attendance at Leamington Spa with the revitalized Continental watering places. Nevertheless, there was still sufficient upper class presence for Granville to remark that: “At Leamington, unquestionably, no dross of society or even ambiguous characters will be found among those who assemble at the Pumproom for their health and the waters. The place is yet too choice and costly to admit of any but the very tip-top of society.” Accordingly, he continued:

one recognised the moment one entered the Mall, in the pale faces of some fair damsels, – the hurried and puffing steps of a portly Lady Gertrude, – the halting gait of a certain right honourable – and the saffronized looks of a haughty perambulator, persons of importance in society, members of distinguished and well-known aristocratic families, or wealthy commoners.⁵⁶

Echoing commentaries from the preceding century, those who attended the spa resorts, Granville surmised, were there for deliberately social purposes: “The conclusion to be derived from this fact is, that not one tithe of the people who come to Leamington take, or are desired to take, the water.” Not even the veneer of health and medicine was adequate by this point in time to obscure the primacy of leisure, pleasure and social intercourse as the motive forces behind attendance.⁵⁷

The rending of the veil that had permitted generations of spa visitors to participate in an elite cultural performance under the aegis of therapeutic prescription revealed, for some commentators, a dissolute set of social actors and practices, providing a damning indictment of an aristocratic culture that continued to exert tremendous political and cultural influence. Growing middle class disdain for these old elites is evident in satires such as those penned by the pseudonymous Thomas Brown, the Elder. In volume I of *Bath; A Satirical Novel*, his character, Lord Glen Eagle, arrived in Bath and eagerly proceeded to partake of the town’s attractions:

⁵⁵ Phyllis Hembry, *British Spas from 1815 to the Present* (see note 35), 9.

⁵⁶ Phyllis Hembry, *British Spas from 1815 to the Present* (see note 35), 9.

⁵⁷ Augustus Bozzi Granville, *The Spas of England, and Principal Sea-Bathing Places: Midland Spas* (London: Henry Colburn, 1841), 228.

his first visit was to the pump-room, that panorama of all the characters of Europe, that masqueradish display of loveliness and decrepitude, of vitiated and premature age, of artificial and ill-imitated youth, with here my Lord Padagrus and Alderman Anasarca, there Miss Mimikin about to run away with an officer, and Lady Languish, of half-a-century old, trussed up like a turkey for the spit, larded with paint and perfumes, and hanging out for an intrigue, whilst she is regretting how well the waters agree with her debilitated paralytic spouse.⁵⁸

Brown's caustic prose portrayed English spa society as grotesque, framing the performance of those taking the waters as one of artifice and deception. On a visit that took place in Cheltenham, Leamington's competing spa resort, in 1826, William Cobbett expressed similar sentiments, although the denizens of Bath excoriated by Cobbett were less visibly confined to one social group. Rather, he wrote, the town was:

what they call a 'watering-place;' that is to say a place to which East India plunderers, West India floggers, English tax-gorgers, together with gluttons, drunkards, and debauchees of all descriptions, *female* as well as male, resort at the suggestion of silently laughing quacks, in the hope of getting rid of the bodily consequences of their manifold sins and iniquities.⁵⁹

Just in case his readers were in any doubt, "to places like this" wrote Cobbett "come all that is knavish and all that is foolish and all that is base; gamesters, pickpockets, and harlots; young wife-hunters in search of rich and ugly and old women, and young husband-hunters in search of rich and wrinkled or half-rotten men. ..."⁶⁰

The end of the Revolutionary Wars and the passing of the schizophrenic Regency era (1811–1820), a period in which the aristocratic renaissance embodied by George IV (1800) obscured the increasing squalor and misery experienced by many Britons, gradually coalesced with the moral piety and reformism exemplified by Cobbett to form the basis for the middle class culture that would de-

58 Thomas Brown, the Elder, *Bath: A Satirical Novel*. Vol. 1 (London: printed for the author, 1818), 54.

59 Augustus Bozzi Granville, *The Spas of England* (see note 57), 228.

60 William Cobbett, "Rural Ride," *Cobbett's Weekly Register* 60.3 (Saturday October 14, 1826): 145. Cobbett's moralizing was one expression of the bourgeois "Victorianization" of British society in the early nineteenth century. See Allison P. Coudert, "Space, Time, and Identity: Giovanni Battista Piranesi and the Epidemic of Ennui in the Pre-modern West," *Travel, Time, and Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time: Explorations of World Perceptions and Processes of Identity Formation*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 22 (Berlin and Boston, MA: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 647–96. Even more insightful in this context proves to be Coudert's contribution to the present volume.

fine Victorian Britain. In this context, display, excess, self-indulgence and hedonism gave way to a very different set of dominant values centered on respectability, virtue and self-help. At the same time the increasingly scientific medical profession was transitioning healing away from the bedside to the hospital, rendering the spa town and its medicinal waters as a location for therapeutic sociability redundant.⁶¹ With the new leisure destinations opened up by the arrival of the railways in the 1840s and the changing composition of spa visitors as a less affluent and elderly constituency arrived for the waters, the spa towns declined. “Bath,” Hembry writes “was ‘deserted by fashion’ it was said by 1832.” When the cholera epidemic struck in 1849, Bath was effectively finished as a resort destination for the British upper classes.⁶² What remained, in Bath and in the dozens of other spas across the country, was a medicalized conception of water cure better suited to the scientific discourse that accompanied bourgeois reform and progression. As hydrotherapeutic and hydropathic treatment centers, the thermal and mineral waters continued to be utilized for healing purposes, as they had for hundreds of years.⁶³ But the pageant that was spa society, and the heterotopic opportunities for cross-class interaction and transmutation arising from it, was over.

61 Nicholas D. Jewson, “The Disappearance of the Sick-Man From Medical Cosmology, 1770–1870,” *Sociology* 10.2 (May, 1976): 225–44.

62 Hembry, *British Spas* (see note 35), 62.

63 Jane M. Adams, *Healing with Water: English Spas and the Water Cure, 1840–1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

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Nine Men's Medievalisms: *Conquests of the Longbow*, Nine Men's Morris, and the Impossibilities of a Half-Forgotten Game's Ludic Past

In his influential work, *Inventing the Middle Ages*, Norman Cantor argues that the modern and the medieval are fundamentally interrelated concerns.¹ As he writes about many of the central figures of twentieth-century Medieval Studies, our understanding of the Middle Ages is necessarily predicated on and thereby colored by the exigencies of the present. This point is perhaps nowhere more obvious than in the subject that forms the theme of this volume: leisure and play in the Middle Ages. As Paul Milliman writes, “Games and pastimes are everywhere and nowhere” in the Middle Ages; they “are marginal ..., mentioned in passing, or serve as metaphors in works concerned mainly with other topics.”² Likewise, games and pastimes have, until recently, been everywhere and nowhere in the present. While an integral and ubiquitous part of contemporary culture, they have rarely been treated as important in their own right and, as Brian Sutton-Smith notes, are often only afforded serious attention in the context of children's play and development.³ The same arguably holds true for their reception in Medieval Studies, which, as Betsy McCormick writes, has “traditionally operated on an assumption about, rather than an investigation into, both the term and the theoretical concept of ‘game.’”⁴

This relationship, however, has undergone a reversal of sorts with the emergence of computer games and gaming culture as a mass-market phenomenon. As Stephen Kline, Nick Dyer-Witheford, and Greig de Peuter write, computer games

1 Norman F. Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991), 28.

2 Paul Milliman, “Games and Pastimes,” *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), vol. 1, 582–612; here 583.

3 Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Ambiguity of Play* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 18.

4 Betsy McCormick, “Afterward: Medieval Ludens,” *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature*, ed. Serina Patterson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 209–22; here 209.

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have not only become serious business, they have come to emblemize what, to many digital futurists, is the promise of the so-called information revolution – the positivist belief that computers and computer-enabled technology will transform the moribund, centralized institutions of industrialized capitalism into a “decentralized, connective, and populist republic of technology.”⁵ Computer games, as such, have also become the subject of serious scholarship. Their twin-ed commercial and technological successes have inspired the foundation of an ostensibly “new” academic discipline – Game Studies – which has adopted as its object of study not only digital games, but also board games, card games, and many other manifestations of play in contemporary culture.

As we write elsewhere, Game Studies has also led to a rediscovery of Huizinga’s work on play, especially his concept of the magic circle.⁶ In Medieval Studies, the success of computer games has likewise led to a renewed interest in play and games in the Middle Ages. It has produced, in addition to this volume and the symposium leading up to it, Serena Patterson’s recent essay collection, *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature* as well as a number of sessions on the topic at both the International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and the International Medieval Congress in Leeds, England.⁷

As encouraging as these developments are, it is nevertheless important to recognize that medieval games and pastimes have long been a staple of popular medievalism. As Milliman notes, the “ludic Middle Ages” are everywhere present in contemporary Renaissance festivals and computer role-playing games and were equally central to the “idyllic image of the ‘Merrie Olde’ Middle Ages” as manifested in Sir Walter Scott’s work and such events as the 1839 Eglington Tournament.⁸ Yet as with the more immediate subject of medieval play and games, popular medievalism is also everywhere and nowhere in Medieval Studies. This is in large part because, like games and play themselves, medievalism is frequently dismissed as childlike. “Filtered,” as John Ganim writes, “through the lenses of Tolkien, Disney, various theme restaurants, commercially produced ‘fairs’ and even Las Vegas..., popular medievalism has acquired the function

5 Stephen Kline, Nick Dyer-Witheford, and Greig de Peuter. *Digital Play: The Interaction of Technology, Culture, and Marketing* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 17.

6 Kevin Moberly and Brent Moberly, “Play,” *Medievalism: Key Critical Terms*, ed. Elizabeth Emery and Richard Utz (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014), 173–80; here 175; McCormick, “Medieval Ludens” (see note 4), 209–10.

7 Patterson, *Games and Gaming* (see note 4).

8 Milliman, “Games and Pastimes” (see note 2), 582–83; here 583.

of licensing innocence.”⁹ The irony of this, of course, is that many of the impulses that are often discounted as “medievalism” not only predate, but as Kathleen Biddick and Carolyn Dinshaw persuasively argue, inform Medieval Studies.¹⁰ Yet despite their age, influence, and ubiquity, such practices are rarely appreciated or accepted as serious scholarship. As Ganim suggests above, popular medievalism is instead constructed as a form of play – a game that, whether manifested as a hobby or an obsession, approaches the ostensibly “real” Middle Ages as a limitless source of amusement, distraction, and fun.¹¹

Accordingly, Medieval Studies tends to construct popular medievalism in much of the same way that play and games have traditionally been constructed; as Richard Utz writes, it tends to infantilize medievalism, often articulating the complexities and ambiguities of its own disciplinary past in terms of deficiency, sublimation, and remedy.¹² In this equation, the more mature, rigorous, and serious field is imagined as offering a corrective to the excesses and omissions of its more playful and undisciplined counterpart.¹³ Grounded in what Biddick and Dinshaw describe as an implicitly positivist, hierarchical approach to knowledge and history, this relationship does not see medievalism’s excesses and omissions as objects of study in their own right, but instead approaches them as impediments: obstacles that must be successively backfilled and smoothed over to produce an account of the medieval that is as uncluttered and uninterrupted as possible.¹⁴

In doing so, this tendency effaces what, we worry, is the more interesting, complex, and difficult question – namely, the question of how these excesses and omissions were produced in the first place, how they are perpetuated, and how they have come to be canonical. In the context of the subject at hand – play and leisure in the Middle Ages – we worry that what is being effaced is the larger question of what it means, as Milliman writes, that play and games

9 John Ganim, *Medievalism and Orientalism: Three Essays on Literature, Architecture, and Cultural Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 4. On the long and enduring association of medievalism and childhood, see also David Matthews, *Medievalism: A Critical History* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), 132–39.

10 Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1998), 1–16; Carolyn Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now? Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 25.

11 Ganim, *Medievalism* (see note 9), 4.

12 Richard Utz, *Medievalism: A Manifesto* (Kalamazoo, MI: Arc Humanities Press, 2017), 85.

13 Utz, *Medievalism* (see note 12), 85. On Medievalism as an “anti-discipline,” see also Matthews, *Medievalism* (see note 9), 165–81; here 178.

14 Biddick, *Shock of Medievalism* (see note 10), 1–2; Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now* (see note 10), 24–28.

were often relegated to the margins in the Middle Ages, as well as the parallel question of what it means that, until recently, much of the same could be said about the status of play and games in our own times.¹⁵ We worry, in short, that what is being effaced is the question of how these margins are produced, how they are constructed and maintained, and how they frame, define, and legitimate the more privileged textual practices at the center.

To this end, our essay examines the way that a half-forgotten medieval game, Nine men's morris, is reproduced as real in a half-forgotten computer game: Sierra Entertainment's *Conquests of the Longbow: The Legend of Robin Hood*.¹⁶ Released in 1991, *Conquests of the Longbow* was the second and (and last) installment of Sierra's short-lived *Conquest* series of medieval-themed computer games. It was also the third mass-market game released that year featuring Robin Hood – a moment of ludic synchronicity perhaps motivated by a desire to capitalize on the release of the 1991 feature film, *Robin Hood Prince of Thieves*.¹⁷ While the other two games explicitly promise the cinematic experience of the film, Sierra's title offers players a chance to play in and through Robin Hood's Middle Ages itself. As the back cover of its box makes clear, the game employs the "brilliant palette of an illuminated medieval manuscript" to capture the "splendor of 12th century England" and features an "original soundtrack based on medieval music styles, using the sounds of period instruments."¹⁸ More significantly, *Conquests of the Longbow* promises players a chance to test their heroic inclinations against a series of medieval-inspired arcade challenges, including an "authentic medieval board game, 9 Men's Morris."¹⁹

Conquests of the Longbow thus makes a case for its value in part by the degree to which it is able to reproduce as authentic the experience of Robin Hood's legend as it is mediated through and validated by a number of ostensibly genuine medieval reproductions, including several presumably "authentic" representations of medieval play. In doing so, the game promotes itself as a self-consciously historicist project, one that its chief designer, Christy Marx, explicitly conceptualizes in terms of an artistic revival in the design postmortem published

15 Milliman, "Games and Pastimes" (see note 2), 583.

16 *Conquests of the Longbow: The Legend of Robin Hood* (Coarsegold, CA: Sierra On-Line, Inc., 1991).

17 Aside from Sierra's title, the other two Robin Hood-themed computer games were *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (Salt Lake City, UT: Sculptured Software, Bits Studios, 1991) and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (Cambridge, England: Millennium Interactive Ltd., 1991).

18 *Conquests of the Longbow: The Legend of Robin Hood Game Box* (Coarsegold, CA: Sierra On-Line, Inc., 1991), back cover.

19 *Conquests Game Box* (see note 18), back cover.

at the start of the game's hint book.²⁰ After admitting that she is "fascinated by ruins, by ancient writing and tantalizing hints of lost knowledge," she writes that working on the game represents "another chance to mix legend and history," "Robin Hood" and "Twelfth-century England," "fanciful ballads written about King Richard," and "all sorts of wonderful information about [Nottingham's] background," obtained from the town's historical society.²¹ *Conquests of the Longbow* is interesting, in this sense, for what it reveals about the discursive logic that, if not a game in and of itself, nevertheless manifests itself as a form of play – which is to say, the discursive logic through which the complex, heterogeneous cultural practices congealed in games and play are standardized, categorized, and homogenized as medieval.

This essay examines how *Conquests of the Longbow* deploys this logic through the specific example of Nine men's morris, which it incorporates not only into its digital gameplay, but also in its physical packaging in the form of a folded, cardboard morris board included in its game box alongside its manual and installation diskettes. Paradoxically well-known and half-forgotten, Nine men's morris exemplifies many of the difficulties that trouble the essays in this volume. For one thing, the game was not as homogenous as it is often represented in many popular accounts of medieval games. It was played sometimes with dice and sometimes without dice, as well as on two related but relatively distinct boards. Worse yet, much of the specific details about how these variations were played have been lost to history. In fact, the scholarly consensus is that Nine men's morris is not, as the *Conquests of the Longbow* game box claims, an "authentic medieval board game," but likely predates the Middle Ages by several centuries.²² Yet as the example of *Conquests of the Longbow* reveals, the game has become indelibly associated not only with the medieval, but with a specific version of the medieval: a vision of "Merrie" England as it is often celebrated and perpetuated through the Robin Hood tales and similar traditions.

20 Christy Marx, "A Game is Born...," *Conquests of the Longbow: The Legend of Robin Hood Hint-book* (Coarsegold, CA: Sierra On-Line, Inc., 1992), 4–17. In the gaming industry, a design postmortem is a document that details the design and implementation of a specific game. Although the gaming industry adopted this practice from software development and other technical fields, these documents more often than not serve a promotional rather than an analytical purpose. As is the case with Marx's postmortem, which appears at the start of *Conquests of the Longbow's* hint book, they are written for interested players and are often published as part of supplementary materials about the game.

21 Marx, "A Game is Born" (see note 20), 4–5.

22 *Conquests Game Box* (see note 18), back cover.

In an effort to understand the origins of this association and how it functions discursively within *Conquests of the Longbow* to legitimize and validate Marx's historicist recovery of Robin Hood, we turn to the archaeological record and to medieval accounts of Nine men's morris. In doing so, our goal is to come to terms not only with what is known but also, and more significantly, with what is not known (and is arguably unknowable) about the game and its medieval past. We then examine the way Joseph Strutt describes the game in his influential 1801 work, *Glig-Gamena Angel-Deod, or, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*.²³ We argue that *Conquests of the Longbow* reproduces as real – which is to say, medieval – the version of the game that Joseph Strutt initially identified with the romanticized virtues of the medieval English countryside. In doing so, the game reproduces a version of Nine men's morris that is not interested in the complications of its past, medieval or otherwise, but which effaces these uncertainties in the name of producing an “authentic medieval game” that is nevertheless familiar to and playable by contemporary audiences – a version of Nine men's morris that allows players to participate in the past through the affordances of the present. *Conquests of the Longbow* thus engages in an older, but very much still-present antiquarian tradition that continues to complicate our understanding not only of Nine men's morris but of any number of other, presumably medieval games. As such, it speaks to the larger challenges that scholars face as we attempt to simultaneously capitalize on the emergence of games and gaming as a mass-market phenomenon yet also seek to do justice to the complexity of the games themselves and, by implication, the periods during which they were played and the people who played them.

Invoking the Past Through Play: Nottingham to Nine Men's Morris

One of the more charming aspects of *Conquests of the Longbow* is the extent to which the game insists upon the historicity of Nottinghamshire's more well-known tourist destinations. The game, for example, renders St. Mary's Church in Nottingham, which was rebuilt starting in the late-fourteenth century in the perpendicular Gothic style, as a decidedly more Normanesque structure, itself under construction and described in-game as “but the latest church to be built” on the

²³ Joseph Strutt, *Glig-Gamena Angel-Deod: Or, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (London: J. White, 1801; Thomas Tegg and Son, 1838). “Glig-Gamena Angel-Deod” was dropped after the 1801 edition. All citations refer to the 1838 Thomas Tegg and Son edition.

site.²⁴ Nottingham's infamous Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem pub also makes an appearance in the game as a more modest version of its present self: the "Trip to Jerusalem" pub, which consists of a single room set into a cave at the base of Castle Rock and protected from the elements by a simple wood-framed entrance and thatched roof. Likewise, a "venerable oak" stands in roughly the same spot in the game's version of the Sherwood forest as does the Major Oak in the actual Sherwood Forest, albeit without the scaffolding that now supports its branches. The game even restores Nottingham's castle to its former glory. The bulk of the castle was razed in the seventeenth century, but in the game, the castle still looms over the town from high atop Castle Rock, its gatehouse readily recognizable as a version of the Nottingham Castle Gatehouse as it exists today, only with much rougher stonework and without the decorative elements that were added when the structure was restored in 1908.²⁵

As Marx acknowledges in her postmortem, much of the game's content was inspired by materials she received from the historical library of Nottingham – as she puts it, "maps, drawings of the castle, descriptions of their fairs and market products, and all those obscure, but useful bits of background information that become so vital to the richness of a game."²⁶ Marx, however, integrates these materials into her game with considerable artistic license. For example, the in-game version of St. Mary's Church arguably owes as much of its inspiration to Ken Follett's Kingsbridge Cathedral as it does to evidence, archaeological or otherwise, from the site of the present-day church.²⁷ Likewise, the Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem claims to date to the late-twelfth century, but, as even its own marketing materials admit, the only proof for this dating is a plaque affixed to the exterior of its

24 On the history of St. Mary's Church, Nottingham, see Jennifer S. Alexander and Linda Monckton, "'Excellent, New, and Uniforme Yn Worke,' St. Mary's Nottingham, An Architectural, Structural, and Archaeological Study," *Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire* 118 (2014): 39–60.

25 On the history of Nottingham Castle and its gatehouse, see Christopher Drage, *Nottingham Castle, A Place Full Royal*, *Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire* 93 (Nottingham: Nottingham Civic Society, Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire, 1990), 31–74. Here, Drage's *Place Full Royal* occupies the whole of the journal volume.

26 Marx, "A Game is Born..." (see note 20), 5.

27 Ken Follett's 1989 historical novel, *The Pillars of the Earth* (New York: Morrow, 1989), follows the construction of the fictional Kingsbridge Cathedral in twelfth-century England. As Alexander and Monckton write, "The fabric evidence at St Mary's for anything before the late-medieval building is extremely limited." According to them, elements of the earlier church that were reused in the construction of the current church "imply that the earlier St Mary's was a grandly-executed 13th-century church of some architectural pretension" Alexander and Monckton, "Excellent, New, and Uniforme" (see note 24), 41–42.

current building.²⁸ This is not to say that the pub is not quite old, but the earliest records of its existence date from the eighteenth century.²⁹ Furthermore, early records indicate that the pub was named “The Pilgrim” until the end of the eighteenth century, when its name was changed to “Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem.”³⁰ As for Nottingham castle, it was rebuilt in stone during the reign of Henry II, but the distinctive gateway to its outer bailey, which features so prominently in game, dates from the mid-thirteenth century and was so extensively restored in 1908 that it, “can hardly be counted,” as Nikolaus Pevsner writes, as medieval.³¹

To be fair, though, Marx’s goal is not so much historical accuracy as “authenticity,” which is to say historical and legendary continuity: a version of twelfth-century Nottinghamshire that is nevertheless recognizable to those familiar with present-day Nottinghamshire and its claims on the Robin Hood legend. As with the Major Oak, Marx accomplishes this by removing just enough of the modern scaffolding associated with the landmarks that feature so prominently in-game as to render them as compelling versions of their past selves, but not so much as to make them wholly unrecognizable to contemporary audiences. Marx adapts a similar strategy to recover Robin Hood and the key components of his legend. As she acknowledges in the game’s manual, there was probably never “really a Robin Hood,” at least not, as she writes, “under that name.”³² Ac-

28 *Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem: The Legend’s and History of England’s Oldest Inn* (2009), 1–2; online at: http://www.experiencenottinghamshire.com/downloads/dmsmgs/booklet_1354193005.pdf (last accessed on Jan. 27, 2019).

29 Harry Gill, “The Old Inns of Brewhouse Yard,” *Transactions of the Thorton Society of Nottinghamshire* 13 (1909): 57–69; here 64; *Ye Olde Trip* (see note 28), 4–5.

30 Gill, “The Old Inns” (see note 29), 64; *Ye Olde Trip* (see note 28), 5.

31 On the improvements to Nottingham Castle during the reign of Henry II, see Drage, “Nottingham Castle” (see note 25), 37–42. In 1251, Henry III ordered the construction of the Outer Bailey’s gatehouse. See Drage, “Nottingham Castle” (see note 25), 44. On the various post-medieval restorations and modifications to the gatehouse, see Christopher Drage, “Nottingham Castle: The Gatehouse of the Outer Bailey,” *Transactions of the Thorton Society of Nottinghamshire* 85 (1981): 48–55. For Nikolaus Pevsner’s critique of the gatehouse’s restoration in the early twentieth century, see his *Nottinghamshire. The Buildings of England*, Vol. 2 (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1951), 130.

32 Christy Marx, *Conquests of the Longbow: The Legend of Robin Hood Game Manual* (Coursegold, CA: Sierra On-Line, Inc., 1991), 6. On Robin Hood and his origins, see R. H. Hilton, “The Origins of Robin Hood,” *Past and Present* 14 (1958): 30–44; J. C. Holt, “The Audience and Origins of the Ballads of Robin Hood,” *Past and Present* 18 (1960): 89–110; J. C. Holt, *Robin Hood*, revised edition (London: Thames and Hudson: 1989); Stephen Knight, *Robin Hood: A Complete Study of the English Outlaw* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994); R. B. Dobson, “Robin Hood: The Genesis of a Popular Hero,” *Robin Hood in Popular Culture: Violence, Transgression, and Justin*, ed. Thomas Hahn (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), 61–77; and Maurice

cordingly, she approaches him as a kind of conundrum, a timeless figure who exists at the intersections of “history and wish fulfillment and just the plain human desire for a good rousing story with a likable hero.”³³ Drawing on what she describes in bold-face as “two excellent reference books: **Robin Hood** by J.C. Holt and **The Outlaws of Medieval Legend** by Maurice Keen,” Marx offers players a condensed, though more or less salient account of how our contemporary understanding of Robin Hood has emerged through the centuries from a variety of sources and traditions, including *Piers Plowman*, “fragments of ballads and poems ... dating to the 15th century,” the pageants held during the May Games in England, and, of course, Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe*.³⁴

Yet while Marx acknowledges the importance of the ballad tradition and many of the early sources about Robin Hood, she nevertheless defaults to what Richard Clouet describes as the contemporary, consensus view of Robin Hood and his particulars, which is to say, the way that he appears in the vast majority of twentieth-century films and television shows.³⁵ As Clouet writes, these productions were inspired less by the medieval ballads than by the way that several influential nineteenth-century novelists, including Scott and Alexandre Dumas the Elder, adapted and embellished Joseph Ritson’s 1795 account of the outlaw, which was itself an adaptation of many earlier traditions, including the May Game pageants that featured Robin Hood.³⁶ Robin Hood thus appears in many twentieth-century films as a dispossessed twelfth-century nobleman rather than a yeoman, an “oppressed Anglo-Saxon struggling against the Norman oppressor” in the form of Prince John and his various henchmen.³⁷ Unquestionably loyal to King Richard, he is represented as courteous to a fault, and unlike in many of the ballads, robs from the rich to give to the poor.³⁸ Although the cinematic version of Robin Hood is not particularly religious, he nevertheless

Keen, *The Outlaws of Medieval Legend*, third edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2000). As we discuss below, Marx cites Holt’s *Robin Hood* and Keen’s *Outlaws of Medieval Legend* as key sources for her reconstruction of Robin Hood (6).

33 Marx, *Conquests Manual* (see note 32), 6.

34 Marx, *Conquests Manual* (see note 32), 6. Here, Marx bold-faces the titles of the works she references.

35 Richard Clouet, “The Robin Hood Legend and its Cultural Adaptation for the Film Industry: Comparing Literary Sources with Filmic Representations,” *Journal of English Studies* 3 (2001–2002): 37–46; here 38.

36 Clouet, “Robin Hood Legend” (see note 35), 42–43.

37 Clouet, “Robin Hood Legend” (see note 35), 38.

38 Clouet, “Robin Hood Legend” (see note 35), 43.

finds purpose in his doubled quest to rescue Maid Marian and to secure the release of his monarch.³⁹

Conquests of the Longbow more or less conforms to these conventions, yet as with the historical landmarks discussed above, it also incorporates elements from earlier traditions in a nod toward authenticity and historical continuity. The game, for example, is set in the late-twelfth century and portrays Robin as a victim of political oppression, a refugee of sorts who has fled to the wilds of Sherwood Forest to escape persecution by Prince John and the Sheriff of Nottingham after being dispossessed of his lands. The game, however, is somewhat ambiguous about Robin Hood's actual social rank. As Clouet writes about *A Gest of Robyn Hode*, the game constantly refers to him as a yeoman but differentiates him from Friar Tuck, Will Scarlet, Much the Miller's son, and other members of his retinue through his oftentimes explicitly chivalric behavior.⁴⁰ Likewise, the game retains the larger historical framework that twentieth-century film tradition has inherited from *Ivanhoe*, but it arguably rejuvenates this tradition by interspersing it with late twentieth-century New Age tropes, including a dream vision in which a distinctly druidic version of Maid Marion visits Robin in his sleep.

Conquests of the Longbow also adopts the rough outlines of the quasi-historical plot that Scott popularized in *Ivanhoe*. Players learn, for instance, that King Leopold of Vienna is holding Richard the Lionheart hostage for 100,000 golden marks and that Queen Elinor has been working diligently to raise the funds for his return. It is not *Ivanhoe*, though, who sets out to secure Richard's release in *Conquests of the Longbow*, but Maid Marian.⁴¹ She learns that Prince John has misappropriated 50,000 marks meant for the ransom and intends to deliver the funds via armed horse and cart to the Abbot of Nottingham through Watling Street. Accordingly, she enlists Robin and his men to waylay the shipment and recover the treasure.

In any other genre, a simple ambush would suffice, but *Conquests of the Longbow* is an adventure game and as a number of scholars have pointed out, adventure games are anything but direct. Clara Fernández-Vara, for example, argues that unlike other genres that privilege "hand-eye coordination and quick reflexes," adventure games often deliberately attempt to "slow down the pace

³⁹ Clouet, "Robin Hood Legend" (see note 35), 43.

⁴⁰ Clouet, "Robin Hood Legend" (see note 35), 39.

⁴¹ In granting Maid Marian such a prominent role in *Conquests of the Longbow*, Marx is arguably participating in what was, by the early-1990's, a relatively well-established, though somewhat still contested tradition of Maid Marian as an empowered actor in popular Robin Hood narratives. See Sherron Lux, "And the 'Reel' Maid Marian?," *Robin Hood in Popular Culture: Violence, Transgression, and Justin*, ed. Thomas Hahn (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), 151–60.

of game play” through puzzles and riddles, often artificially prolonging their otherwise linear, episodic gameplay.⁴² Krista Bonello Rutter Giappone offers a similar assessment. Building on Fernández-Vara’s work, she writes that the “adventure game genre is structured around detours – puzzles frequently open onto other puzzles, leading to 2, 3, 4–part (and upwards) puzzles.”⁴³ As Giappone acknowledges, the resulting gameplay can be frustrating. Predicated on constantly interrupting players, it can easily devolve into what has derisively become known as “pixel hunting” – methodically scanning the game’s scenery with the mouse cursor in search of hidden triggers that are required to solve puzzles or otherwise advance the plot.⁴⁴ Accordingly, adventure games are often represented as a kind of ludic dead end by game scholars – a view perhaps best articulated by Espen Aarseth:

Unlike other games, but like most novels, these games are normally only played once, and typically not completed. This makes them very different from other games. Players are often stuck on one of the puzzles and have no choice but either to buy the solutions book, download a “walkthrough” guide from the internet, or give up. Perhaps we could say that this genre is really only one and the same game, the same rule system repeated over and over with variable cultural conventions and increasingly better technology.⁴⁵

Giappone, however, makes a case for the genre. Studying the way that games such as those in LucasArts’ *Monkey Island* franchise use humor and parody to foreground the contradictions and “fractures in the coherence of the gameworld(s),” she argues that adventure games offer players a unique form of immersion and interaction, one that is more akin to the type of metatextual, critical play that post-modern critics such as Jean-François Lyotard associate with interpretation than

42 Clara Fernández-Vara, “Shaping Player Experience in Adventure Games: History of the Adventure Game Interface,” *Extending Experiences – Structure, Analysis and Design of Computer Game Player Experience*, ed. Olli Leino, Hanna Wirman, and Amyris Fernandez (Rovaniemi, Finland: Lapland University Press, 2008), 210–27; here 211.

43 Krista Bonello Rutter Giappone, “Self-Reflexivity and Humor in Adventure Games,” *Game Studies: The International Journal of Computer Game Research*, 15:1 (July 2015): para. 17; online at: http://gamestudies.org/1501/articles/bonello_k (last accessed on Jan. 27, 2019).

44 Giappone, “Adventure Games” (see note 43), para. 11. One of the most famous examples of pixel-hunting occurs in LucasArt’s 1989 adventure game, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Graphic Adventure*. Players find themselves in an immense library filled with towering, wall-to-wall bookcases. Players must successively locate a number of specific books amidst all of the brightly colored but otherwise nondescript books that fill the shelves.

45 Espen Aarseth, “Genre Trouble: Narrativism and the Art of Simulation,” *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance and Game*, ed. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 45–55; here 51.

with the fast-paced, breakneck action that arcade games and other genres privilege.⁴⁶ To Giappone, then, adventure games do not construct players as integral, but as ancillary to the gameworld. As is the case with traditional jigsaw puzzles, they require players to work from the outside in to reassemble not a coherent picture exactly, but a coherent narrative from the otherwise jumbled mix of objects, characters, and scenes that comprise the gameworld.

While *Conquests of the Longbow* is more earnest than many of the adventure games Giappone studies, her insights are nevertheless useful for understanding how the game translates what Jeffrey Singman describes as the already ludic conventions of the Robin Hood legend into gameplay, particularly the way that it positions players in relationship to Robin Hood himself.⁴⁷ As Giappone points out, one of the defining characteristics of the adventure game genre is the way that it constructs players as subjects both through and in opposition to the characters they ostensibly control. Building on Daniel Vella's observation that the "avatar is *both* the player's embodiment in the gameworld *and* a distinct character bearing its own set of properties and characteristics," she argues that many adventure games purposely accentuate the resulting sense of disconnection.⁴⁸ Working within and through the limitations of the interface, they purposefully distance players from the characters they control as a means of disrupting their otherwise linear progress through the game and redirecting their attention to the overarching problem of how to make sense of the various contradictions and disconnects that comprise its game world. The player character, as such, is often not an asset but an impediment in adventure games. As with almost every aspect of the games, it represents a discrete piece of a larger puzzle, one that players must manage and manipulate in accordance with their larger sense of the character's overarching role and purpose within the constantly evolving construct of the game.

To illustrate this point, Giappone turns to Guybrush Threepwood, the comic hero of LucasArts's *Monkey Island* franchise. As she writes, Threepwood is in many ways independent from the players who control him. He not only refuses to carry out commands if players ask him to perform an action that is impossible in the context of the game, but also refuses to interact with objects made from porcelain, to which he has a well-known aversion. Although Giappone acknowl-

⁴⁶ Giappone, "Adventure Games" (see note 43), para. 58.

⁴⁷ Jeffery Singman, *Robin Hood: The Shaping of the Legend*. Contributions to the Study of World Literature (Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press, 1998), 166.

⁴⁸ Daniel Vella, "'It's A-Me/Mario!': Playing as a Ludic Character," *Foundations of Digital Games Conference Proceedings* 8 (2013): 31–38, 38; Giappone, "Adventure Games" (see note 43), para. 24.

edges the humor of such moments, she argues that they serve a larger purpose; they foreground the fact that players are ultimately not interpellated into the game as Threepwood himself, but as his alter-ego.⁴⁹ As Tim Schafer, one of the designers of the *Monkey Island* games puts it, players are constructed and in many ways function as Threepwood's "intuition" or conscience, which he might or might not follow, depending on the circumstances.⁵⁰ At once connected to and disconnected from Threepwood by the game's static, third-person camera, players are thus relegated to a kind of managerial position, one that allows them to oversee but never fully participate in Threepwood's misadventures.

Much of the same can be said for the way that *Conquests of the Longbow* constructs the relationship between players and Robin Hood. The game's box art, for example, hails players as heroes. Addressing them in the second person, it promises them a chance to "live the legend of the longbow": to use their "compassion as well as wits and cunning" to free king Richard, win the hand of Maid Marian, and redeem Robin's good name.⁵¹ Players quickly realize, however, that Robin is a distinct individual, a "third-person protagonist" who, as Giappone writes about Threepwood, "has his own personality" and clearly defined preferences.⁵² What is more, they discover that Robin has been "liv[ing] the legend of the longbow" for some time before they arrive on the scene.⁵³ Although he has not yet met Maid Marion nor initiated the sequence of events that will lead to King Richard's return, Robin is well on his way to establishing his reputation as an outlaw and a celebrated folk hero. He has already built a hideout in Sherwood forest and assembled a formidable band of outlaws, including Friar Tuck, Will Scarlet, Much the Miller's Son, and Little John. Robin has also mastered many of the skills that, according to the back of the box, are required of players. He is already an expert archer, already proficient in quarterstaves, and is a master of woodlore and disguise. Robin has become so infamous, in fact, that he is unable to enter Nottingham without a disguise for fear of being arrested for his exploits.

It quickly becomes clear, however, that Robin is missing one crucial element: the wherewithal to translate these heroic accomplishments into a concrete plan of action. Cast into the role of Robin Hood, players emerge from the rough cave that serves as his sleeping quarters to find Friar Tuck, Little John, and the other outlaws waiting for them. After a bit of banter about Friar Tuck's weight, they learn that the camp's funds have dwindled to less than a "few hundred marks." Accordingly,

49 Giappone, "Adventure Games" (see note 43), para. 24–26.

50 Tim Schafer, quoted in Giappone, "Adventure Games" (see note 43), para. 25.

51 *Conquests Game Box* (see note 18), back cover.

52 Giappone, "Adventure Games" (see note 43), para. 25.

53 *Conquests Game Box* (see note 18), back cover.

players spend much of the remaining day leading Robin through the mosaic of verdant screens that comprise Sherwood Forest, ostensibly searching for a nobleman's purse or two to remedy the situation. In doing so, they discover that Robin is quite literally aimless – that he has no real sense of direction and very little purpose beyond the quotidian struggles of providing his ever-growing band of outlaws with necessities required for their survival. Worse yet, players also discover that Robin has become disenchanted with his life as an outlaw. As he tells Friar Tuck and the others later that night, he has grown tired of being separated from his “kith and kin” and “living as we can in the forest” constantly in fear of being captured and executed. “But don't you dream of living as free men?” he asks them as the ale begins to take effect, “able to walk into town without fear, to love a woman knowing you could stay beyond morn?”

This is, of course, where players come in. As Giappone writes about adventure games in general, players do not as much control Robin Hood as advise him.⁵⁴ Tasked with managing Robin's heroic proclivities, they tell Robin where to travel, what to look at, and with whom to speak. Players also control Robin's inventory; they determine how he spends his money, when and where he uses his weapons, and to some extent, how he interacts with the various items required to solve the game's puzzles. Players, as such, are afforded a very different kind of agency than Robin himself. Indeed, Robin's power is imagined as an expression of what, in the manual, Marx describes as the “unchanging essence” of his timeless medieval character – his ability to “[fight] the good fight, [laugh] boldly in the face of danger, [defy] corrupt authority, and [outwit] his enemies to escape and fight again.”⁵⁵ Players, by contrast, are constructed as modern, if not high-tech subjects. Privy to the affordances of the game's digital technologies, their agency lies in the ostensibly unique and, if the claims on the back of its box can be believed, unprecedented way that its interface positions players in relationship to Robin's imagined medieval potential. The game's technologies thus offer players privileged access to the component pieces of what, in the manual, Marx presents as the larger historical puzzle of Robin Hood: the key characters, events, and locations that comprise the legend. It affords them with the ability to not only see and interact with, but ultimately make sense of the world in a way that is impossible for Robin or, for that matter, any of the game's other explicitly medieval characters.

Conquests of the Longbow, however, also features a number of arcade challenges that attempt to collapse the otherwise sovereign differences between play-

⁵⁴ Giappone, “Adventure Games” (see note 43), para. 25.

⁵⁵ Marx, *Conquests Manual* (see note 32), 7.

ers and Robin Hood. Featuring “adjustable levels of difficulty, including auto-win,” these sequences give players the opportunity to take direct control of Robin in a number of mini-games loosely based on activities such as archery and quarterstaves that have become synonymous with his legend.⁵⁶ The archery mini-game, for example, places players directly behind Robin’s bow. Shifting to the first-person perspective, it repurposes the mouse as an aiming tool, allowing players to compensate for wind and other variables as they attempt to replicate one of Robin Hood’s signature achievements: his victory over the sheriff’s favorites in the archery tournament at Nottingham Faire. Likewise, the quarterstaves minigame gives players direct control of Robin’s actions as he faces off against a “militant” monk whom he encounters on the road to Nottingham. As with the archery mini-game, the key to besting this opponent lies in what, in the manual, Marx describes as players’ “reflexes, timing, and visual skills” – their ability to use the mouse, the keyboard, or, if they have one, a joystick to score blows on the monk while simultaneously anticipating and parrying his attacks.⁵⁷

These minigames thus invert the otherwise managerial perspective of the game’s third-person point-and-click interface, reconfiguring the relationship between player and protagonist so that, for a few moments at least, their agency becomes indistinguishable from Robin’s. In doing so, these minigames also collapse a less obvious, though equally significant binary – the distinction between medieval and modern play. These challenges exploit the game’s high technology to simulate a number of ostensibly low-tech sports and games that are imagined as simultaneously existing prior to yet as nevertheless informing *Conquests of the Longbow*’s gameplay. These minigames, as such, represent the ludic equivalent of scenic details such as the Major Oak, St. Mary’s Church and the various other incomplete landmarks that players encounter on their travels. Explicitly constructed as always in the process of becoming, their seemingly authentic gameplay not only connects players back to Robin Hood and to the key events of his legend, but to a presumably authentic medieval ludic heritage with which, whether fictional or not, Robin Hood is indelibly associated.

This strategy of invoking the past through play is immediately apparent in the third mini-game that *Conquests of the Longbow* advertises on the back of its box: Nine men’s morris. Unlike archery and quarterstaves, which have long been associated with the outlaw, there is no obvious link between Robin Hood and Nine men’s morris, save for the suggestion that the game might have taken its name from the morris dances that figured prominently during the May Day celebrations

⁵⁶ *Conquests Game Box* (see note 18), back cover.

⁵⁷ Marx, *Conquests Manual* (see note 32), 18.

in which Robin Hood pageants also played a significant role.⁵⁸ Yet despite this lack of an explicit connection, players nevertheless discover that they can only progress in the game by besting a character named Old Harry at a game of Nine men's morris. As players learn, Harry is a veteran of Richard's crusade and like Richard, has not yet managed to effect a complete return, but instead spends his days at a corner table of the Trip to Jerusalem Pub, drowning his trauma in mugs of nut-brown ale. He funds this campaign by wagering his last valuable possession – an enchanted amethyst with the power to neutralize the effects of alcohol – against games of Nine men's morris. Harry might have “no use for a spell that keeps me sober,” but Robin requires the stone to beat the abbot in a drinking game and so must beat Harry at Nine men's morris.

Harry, it turns out, plays a relatively conventional, though ruthless game of Nine men's morris. The board carved into Harry's table follows the design of what, as we will discuss later, is today widely accepted as the standard morris board. It consists of three inset squares joined in their middles by four intersecting lines. There are 24 points on the board, formed by the corners of the squares or by the intersections of the lines and the squares. Harry's gameplay is equally standardized, though he does always allow the player the first move. Shown from a top-down, orthogonal perspective, the game opens with a placement phase, in which the player and Harry take turns placing their pieces on the points of the board. After all of the pieces have been placed, the game then enters into its movement phase, and the player and Harry take turns moving their pieces along the lines of the board. The player's goal in both phases is to form what is called “a mill” or a “morris” while preventing Harry from doing the same. Creating a mill allows the player to remove one of Harry's pieces from the board while at the same time protecting the pieces in their mill from removal, should Harry manage to form a mill of his own. The game ends when either the player or Harry has two pieces left or can no longer move. Harry will keep playing until the player wins or runs out of money.

Nine men's morris, as such, simulates the ostensibly authentic gameplay of the original in an attempt to locate players not only in Robin Hood's Middle Ages, but in the larger context of a seedy, twelfth-century England. Yet as with the archery and quarterstaves minigames, players discover that this return to the medieval is fleeting at best. Although everyone in the pub seems to know

58 On Robin Hood, Morris Dancing, and other May Day celebrations, see Elizabeth Swann, “Maid Marian and the Morris: The Connection of the Morris with the Robin Hood Legend,” *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society* 7.1 (1952): 20–25. On their revival in late nineteenth-century Britain, see Roy Judge, “Merrie England and the Morris 1881–1910,” *Folklore* 104.1/2 (1993): 124–43.

how to play the game, only Harry has time for it, and he refuses to play again after he has lost. And once players have beaten Harry and obtained his amethyst, Nine men's morris has no other role in the larger game. The next time players visit the pub and inspect the Morris board, they find that Harry has "gone to his reward" and that the board is abandoned and "gathering dust." Here, the game effects a kind of doubled reenactment. First, and most obviously is the simulation of Nine men's morris itself. Second, there is the reenactment of the game's "passedness" and "historicity," as Sophie Thomas understands the terms in relationship to the role of the ruin in Romantic Era Britain.⁵⁹ As with the way that the game portrays landmarks such as the Major Oak, St. Mary's Church, and even the Ye Olde Jerusalem pub itself, Harry's board is simultaneously imagined as a version of the game's past and present: a game that is at once played and unplayable. Harry's board is thus reduced to a mute and ultimately inscrutable witness to the game's apparent popularity during the Middle Ages and its long and paradoxical history of neglect and recovery afterwards.

Historic Nine Men's Morris: Archaeological Evidence

The irony, of course, is that Nine men's morris was not and never was an "authentic medieval board game."⁶⁰ By all accounts, the game was widely played in the Middle Ages, but the game itself is thought to predate the period. Marx readily admits as much in *Conquests of the Longbow's* manual: "Morris," she writes, "could easily be one of the oldest, still-played board games in the world. It's been found scratched into the roof of a 1400 B.C. Egyptian temple, in the ruins of Troy, in a Bronze Age tomb in Ireland, and in the burial ship of a Viking King."⁶¹ There is, however, an apparent disconnect here between Marx's description of the Nine men's morris as "one of the oldest, still-played board games in the world," and the marketing copy on the game box, which promotes the game as "authentically" medieval. This discrepancy begs the larger question at the heart of our article: if Nine men's morris is, indeed, an ancient game, one that has been played across continents and cultures, then how

⁵⁹ Sophie Thomas, *Romanticism and Visuality: Fragments, History, Spectacle*. Routledge Studies in Romanticism, 10 (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), 80.

⁶⁰ *Conquests Game Box* (see note 18), back cover.

⁶¹ Marx, *Conquests Manual* (see note 32), 14.

does it become medieval, and more specifically, how does it become synonymous with Robin Hood's twelfth-century England?

For Marx, the answer is relatively straightforward. As she acknowledges in the manual's bibliography, her two-sentence history of the game comes from Frederick Grunfeld's 1975 mass-market compendium, *Games of the World: How to Make Them, How to Play Them, and How They Came to Be*, which was produced in consultation with the then-eminent board game scholar R. C. Bell, among others.⁶² Grunfeld's account of the game, in turn, owes much to the work of Bell and R. H. Murray, particularly Bell's *Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations* and Murray's *History of Board Games Other than Chess*.⁶³ Murray treats Nine men's morris briefly in the appendix to the sixth chapter of his 1913 *History of Chess*, but his fuller treatment of the game in his 1952 *History of Board Games* was, until very recently, widely considered to be the definitive account of the game and its origins.⁶⁴

In his *History of Board Games*, Murray distinguishes between two historical larger merels boards, which he labels types F and G.⁶⁵ Board F survives as today's standardized morris board. Board G is similar to board F, but with diagonal spokes joining the corners of the board's inset squares, allowing players more freedom of movement and for eleven or twelve-piece variations on the game.⁶⁶ Murray treats board F as an antecedent to board G, writing that board F is "very old," perhaps dating back to the "Stone and Bronze Age."⁶⁷ To support this claim, Murray cites a board of type F carved along with other gaming boards into the roofing slabs of the Bronze Age temple of Kurna in Egypt and boards of type F unearthed at the Bronze or Stone Age burial site of Cr Br Chualann in Ireland and at the site of Viking-Age Gokstad ship burial in Norway.⁶⁸ Murray's prehistory of the game does not, however, mention Troy. This claim comes from Bell's *Board and Table Games*. "In Europe," Bell writes, boards of type F have

62 Marx, *Conquests Manual* (see note 32), 24; Frederick Grunfeld, ed., *Games of the World: How to Make Them, How to Play Them, and How They Came to Be* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1975).

63 R. C. Bell, *Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations*, 2nd ed. (1960; London: Oxford University Press, 1969); H. J. R. Murray, *A History of Board Games Other than Chess* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952).

64 H. J. R. Murray, *A History of Chess* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 615; Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 48.

65 Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 38. Murray assigns types A through E to the boards of other related three-in-a-row games.

66 Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 43.

67 Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 43–44.

68 Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 44.

been found “on articles from Lake Dwellings, the first city of Troy, and a burial site of the Bronze Age at Cr Bri Chualann (Bray), Co. Wicklow, Ireland.”⁶⁹

While Marx's brief history of the game was correct at the time it was written, Christian Wagneur and Friedrich Berger have recently questioned the reliability of the sources that Murray and Bell cite for the game's Stone or Bronze Age provenance, noting that records of the archaeological digs in Ireland have been lost and thus cannot be verified, and that the game board incised into the roof slabs of the Kurna temple contains a Coptic cross in its infield.⁷⁰ According to Berger, the earliest antecedents of board F that can be dated with any accuracy come from the first century and are associated with Roman sites in France, Germany, Spain, and Syria.⁷¹ As for board G, Murray dates it to “not later than 1400,” noting that al-Fayrūzabādī's early-fifteenth-century Arabic dictionary, *Al-Qamus Al-Muhit*, contains a diagram of the board under the heading “qirq.”⁷² Berger, however, cites archaeological evidence and documentary sources that indicate that board G was known in the Arab world from the tenth century onward, if not before.⁷³

Complicating matters even further, the late-thirteenth-century Spanish *Libro de los Juegos* (which we discuss in more detail below) includes detailed accounts of two versions of the game, both played on board F under the heading “alquerque de nueue” but does not mention board G.⁷⁴ This omission suggests, as Berger writes, “that between the Arab conquest of Spain in 711 and 1282 the meaning

69 Bell, *Board and Table Games* (see note 63), 93.

70 On the evidence for the Bronze Age origins of the game, see Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 18–19, 44; Bell, *Board and Table Games* (see note 63), 93; and Damian Gareth Walker, *A Book of Historic Board Games* (self-pub., lulu.com, 2014), 96–97. On the problems with this evidence, see Friedrich Berger, “From Circle and Square to the Image of the World: A Possible Interpretation for some Petroglyphs of Merels Boards,” *Rock Art Research* 21.1 (2004): 11–25; here 15. Berger's discussion of the evidence (or lack thereof) for the early dating of the game draws upon Christian Wagneur's unpublished work. For a longer discussion of Wagneur's objections to the evidence for the game's bronze age origins, see Marisa Uberti's self-published *The Merels Board Enigma with the Worldwide Census*, trans. Gianluco Toro (self-pub., 2012), 18–26.

71 Berger, “From Circle to Square” (see note 70), 15.

72 Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 43, note 3.

73 Berger, “From Circle to Square” (see note 70), 16.

74 Berger, “From Circle to Square” (see note 70), 16. As Sonya Musser writes, the *Libro de los juegos* is known by a variety of names. Here, we follow Musser in using *Libro de los juegos* to refer to the work as a whole. See her “Los libros de acedrex dados e tablas: Historical, Artistic, and Metaphysical Dimensions of Alfonso X's Book of Games,” Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 2007, 35–37; here 37.

of ‘*al qirq*’ = ‘*alquerque*’ had expanded and ... perhaps lost board G.”⁷⁵ It might be, then, that board F predates board G, but not by as much as was previously thought. It is also unclear, according to Berger, whether boards F and G represent two variations on a common tradition, two distinct traditions, or some combination thereof. The origins of either board are likewise unclear, and it is equally uncertain how and when board G came to the west.⁷⁶ Of the two boards, F is much more widely represented, but instances of board G are attested throughout Europe and the Middle East, at times (but rarely) alongside instances of board F.⁷⁷

The earliest definitive archaeological evidence for the game’s popularity in the medieval west comes from Viking Age sites. As Murray, Bell, and many others have noted, a fragment of a gaming board was discovered in 1880 along with playing pieces among the grave goods of the Gokstad ship-burial.⁷⁸ Nearly a century later, archaeologists unearthed a fragment of another gaming board at the site of the Viking settlement of Toftanes on the Faroe Islands.⁷⁹ The Gokstad

75 Berger, “From Circle to Square” (see note 70), 16. On the etymology and meaning of “alquerque,” see Musser, “Los libros” (see note 74), 613–14. On the etymology of the term and its application to dating Nine men’s morris, see Arie van der Stoep, “The Origin of Morris and Draughts by Etymology,” *Board Game Studies Journal* 9 (2015): 9–15.

76 Berger, “From Circle to Square” (see note 70), 16–17.

77 On the relative distribution of boards of type F and G, the most complete survey of morris boards to date is contained in the second part and appendices of Uberti’s *Merels Board Enigma* (see note 70), 173–333. Of the over-2500 boards documented in Uberti’s survey, nearly 1000 are of type F, while only slightly over 100 are of type G (328). Uberti’s survey is based, in part, on an earlier unpublished survey of merels boards by Wagneur and members of the Groupe d’Études, de Recherches et de Sauvegarde de l’Art Rupestre. According to Friedrich Berger, Wagneur’s survey found that “only six per cent of all large recorded merels boards in France have full diagonals like type G.” See Berger, “From Circle and Square” (see note 70), 16. On sites with boards of both type F and G, Berger notes that boards of type F and G as well as other types of gaming boards are carved into the Roman ruins of Bosra, Syria. Berger is reluctant, however, to date these boards, given the accessibility of the site (15). We count about 50 instances in Uberti’s survey where both types of boards are found in close association or the same sites. Berger’s caution about dating applies to the exemplars in Uberti’s survey as well.

78 Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 44; Bell, *Board and Table Games* (see note 63), 93–94; Walker, *Historic Board Games* (see note 70), 97. For a complete description of the Gokstad ship burial and its contents, including the two-sided gaming board, see N. Nicolaysen, *The Viking Ship Discovered at Gokstad in Norway* (Christiana: Alb Cammermeyer, 1882).

79 Mark Hall, “Playtime Everyday: The Material Culture of Medieval Gaming,” *A History of Everyday Life in Medieval Scotland, 1000–1600*, ed. Edward J Cowan and Lizanne Henderson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 145–168; here 157. For a full description of the Toftanes morris board and its archaeological context, see Steffan Stumman Hansen, “The Norse Landnam in the Faroe Islands in the Light of Recent Excavations at Toftanes, Leirvík,” *Northern Studies* 25 (1998): 58–84; here 72.

board is much more elaborately carved than the Toftanes board, but both are double-sided and both share the same design, with a morris board of type F inscribed on one face and a hnefatafl board on the other. Archaeologists excavating St. Benet's churchyard in the Swinegate area of York have recently uncovered a potential third Viking Age morris board.⁸⁰ This board is also of type F, but it has been carved into the upper surface of a wooden plank covering the skeleton of an infant. As J. M. McComish writes in his 2015 report on the excavations for the York Archaeological trust, it is unclear whether the morris board "was carved specifically for the burial or represented re-use of a convenient plank."⁸¹

On the whole, though, wooden morris boards from the medieval period are relatively rare. Those that do survive are either incorporated into ornate gaming boxes dating from the fifteenth century onwards, or those that, like the Viking Age examples above, have been preserved from the elements by chance.⁸² Most of the archaeological evidence for the game's popularity during the Middle Ages comes in the form of boards scratched into the soft stone of churchyards and castles, cloisters and crusader redoubts, and other medieval sites. More often than not, these boards are informal affairs, etched into convenient surfaces, often alongside other gaming boards, and many, but certainly not all, are associated with ecclesiastical sites.⁸³ Many of these boards cannot be dated

80 J. M. McComish, *Archaeological Investigations at 12–18 Swinegate, 14 Little Stonegate and 18 Back Swinegate*, York Archaeological Trust Web Based Report 2015/44 (2015), 1–39; here 27, 16; online at: <https://www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Swinegate-Final-text-with-Figures.pdf> (last accessed on Jan. 27, 2019).

81 McComish, *Archaeological Investigations* (see note 80), 16.

82 For brief descriptions of wooden, late-medieval gaming boxes, see Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 44; Bell, *Board and Table Games* (see note 63), 95, and Walter Endrei and László Zolnay, *Fun and Games in Old Europe* (Budapest: Corvina, 1988), 67–68. As for examples of earlier, more quotidian wooden boards, in the mid-1990's, archaeologists working in Aarhus, Denmark discovered a morris board carved into a deck plank from a late twelfth-century ship that was later salvaged for use in a thirteenth-century well. See Hans Skov, "Udgravningerne i Århus Midtby 1994–97," *Kuml* 1997–1998 (1998): 227–94; here 255–56 and 293. R. A. Croft also includes drawings of two thirteenth- and fourteenth-century wooden morris boards (one inscribed onto an oak board and another onto a paddle or shovel) in his "Graffiti Gaming Boards," *Finds Research Group 700–1700: Datasheet 6* (1987): 1–2; here 1.

83 According to Uberti's worldwide survey, forty-one percent of merels boards in Europe are found carved into rocks, while thirty-four percent are associated with ecclesiastical sites. The remainder are associated with castles (10%), roads or squares (5%), or housed in museums (10%). Here again, Uberti's survey is not restricted to medieval exempla and includes exempla from pre- and post-medieval periods as well. Uberti, *Merels Board Enigma* (see note 70), 331. On the distribution of medieval sites containing morris boards in the British Isles, see Croft, "Graffiti Gaming Boards" (see note 82), 2; and Hall, "Material Culture" (see note 79), 157.

with any accuracy, given the relative accessibility of the sites where they are found and tendency of builders, medieval or otherwise, to incorporate stone from earlier structures into their own works. For example, archaeologists have discovered 35 gaming boards incised onto slate fragments presumably used by monastic pupils on the island of Inchmarnock, Scotland.⁸⁴ Most of these boards are hnefatafl boards, but four complete morris boards and three possible fragmentary morris boards have been found at the site as well.⁸⁵ In her description of the finds, Anna Ritchie writes that none of the boards, whether for hnefatafl or Nine men's morris or other games, are "closely dateable, but in broad terms they are likely to belong to the period from the 9th to the 14th centuries."⁸⁶ Mark Hall, however, cautions against dating the morris boards before the twelfth century, citing the "difficult-to-cope-with, unclear stratigraphy" of the site.⁸⁷

If we can return briefly to the immediate context of Nottinghamshire, another intriguing pair of morris boards was recently discovered by archaeologists investigating spoil heaps outside of Church Hole Cave from earlier nineteenth-century archaeological excavations.⁸⁸ In this case, both boards were incised concentrically onto a single limestone block, which also bears what appear to be sharpening marks. The outer board is type F, while the inner board is incomplete. According Hall and P. B. Pettitt, the inner board was likely carved first and was either abandoned as too small or was a trial to determine the suitability of the block before the larger, outer board was carved.⁸⁹ Here yet again, it is difficult to date these boards with any precision, as the block was discovered in an area where other blocks had been discarded.⁹⁰ A coin found during the original excavation of the cave as well as those found in 2006 among the spoils from the first excavation suggest that the board might date from the twelfth-century and might perhaps be associated with outlaws who used the caves during that time.⁹¹ Late

⁸⁴ Hall, "Material Culture" (see note 79), 148–50; Anna Ritchie, "Gaming Boards," *Inchmarnock: An Early Historic Island Monastery and its Archaeological Landscape*, ed. Christopher Lowe (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2008), 116–28.

⁸⁵ Ritchie, "Gaming Boards" (see note 84), 119–21. Here again, all of these morris boards appear to be of type F, though one board has a single diagonal joining the corners of two of its inset squares (119).

⁸⁶ Ritchie, "Gaming Boards" (see note 84), 117.

⁸⁷ Hall, "Material Culture" (see note 79), 150.

⁸⁸ Mark Hall and P. B. Pettitt, "A Pair of Merels Boards on a Stone Block from Church Hole Cave, Creswell Crags, Nottinghamshire, England," *The Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire* 112 (2008): 135–42.

⁸⁹ Hall and Pettitt, "Merels Boards" (see note 88), 138.

⁹⁰ Hall and Pettitt, "Merels Boards" (see note 88), 137.

⁹¹ Hall and Pettitt, "Merels Boards" (see note 88), 137.

medieval ceramics discovered *in situ* beneath the spoil heap and in the area where the block was found, however, suggest that the board might date from the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, when shepherds or herdsman used the caves to shelter their flocks.⁹²

Historic Nine Men's Morris: Documentary Evidence

One of the paradoxes of the apparent popularity of Nine men's morris during the Middle Ages is that we have a lot of evidence that it was widely played, but very few sources that document how it was played. Even the name, "Nine men's morris" is an anachronism, one that has come only relatively recently to refer to the game as we know it today. According to the OED, the earliest and most famous use of the term comes in Act II, Scene I of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, when Titania complains that "the nine men's morris is filld vp with mudde" (2.1.98).⁹³ The catch-all term for the game, at least in medieval France and England, was "merels" and its cognates, from the low Latin "merellus," meaning token or marker.⁹⁴ "Merels," though, could refer to a number of distinct varieties of three-in-a-row games played on at least eight distinct boards.⁹⁵ Many sources mention "merels" in passing, but it is unclear if they mean "Nine men's morris" specifically, even if it is often translated this way. For example, Jean de Brie's late-fourteenth-century *Le Bon Berger* advises that shepherds avoid the tavern and "eschever tous jeux excepté le jeu des merelles et due baston" ["shun all games except the game of merelles and of staffs"].⁹⁶ Walter Endrei and László Zolnay, however, translate "des merelles et due baston" as "*nine men's morris* and tip-cat"⁹⁷ Likewise, the early-thirteenth-century French *Rule of the Temple* states that "... nul autre jeu frere dou Temple ne doit joer, fors qu'a marelles...." ["a brother of the Templars should play no other game except *marelles*"], but Elizabeth Lapina translates *marelles* as "Nine men's morris

⁹² Hall and Pettitt, "Merels Boards" (see note 88), 137.

⁹³ *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (1989), s.v. "morris."

⁹⁴ Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 38.

⁹⁵ Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 38.

⁹⁶ For the original text and English translation of the passage, see *The Medieval Shepherd: Jean de Brie's Le Bon Berger* (1379), ed. and trans. Carleton W. Carroll and Lois Hawley Wilson. *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 424 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), 92–93.

⁹⁷ Endrei and Zolnay, *Fun and Games* (see note 82), 67. The emphasis is Endrei and Zolnay's.

(marelles).⁹⁸ Given the number of morris boards that have been found at crusader sites, Lapina's translation is not entirely incorrect.⁹⁹ Still, the term *marelles* may have encompassed a much wider variety of games than the one that we currently know as "Nine men's morris."

Two of the most striking sources that address the game are the *Bonus Socius* and the *Civis Bononiae*, which both exist in multiple copies dating from the thirteenth century onwards.¹⁰⁰ These are collections of end-game scenarios, with illustrations and strategies. They mostly concern themselves with chess, but also document a number of backgammon and Nine men's morris problems. For example, a fourteenth-century copy of the *Bonus Socius* in the National Library of France contains twenty-three textual Nine men's morris solutions, each on its own folio and accompanied by an elaborate explanatory diagram.¹⁰¹ Each diagram is framed in gold, with a board of type F outlined in red or blue ink and set against a light red or royal blue background. Gold letters are drawn on various points of each board as necessary to indicate possible moves, and gold and red ink distinguish the two players' pieces. Each piece is assigned one of six symbols (moon, star, shield, cross, square, and round) according to the needs of the accompanying solution.¹⁰²

98 Elizabeth Lapina, "Gambling and Gaming in the Holy Land: Chess, Dice and Other Games in the Sources of the Crusades," *Crusades* 12 (2013): 121–32; here 129. For the French text, see *La Règle du Temple*, ed. Henri de Curzon (Paris, 1886), 185. For the English translation, see *The Rule of the Templars: The French Text of the Rule of the Order of the Knights Templar*, trans. J. M. Upton-Ward. Studies in the History of Medieval Religion, vol. 4 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), 90.

99 Lapina, "Gambling and Gaming" (see note 98), 122, 129.

100 On the *Bonus Socius* and the *Civis Bononiae* in general and their relation to each other see Murray, *History of Chess* (see note 64), 618–703. Murray's primary concern is the chess problems in either work, but he does address the merels (and tables) problems in either work briefly at the end of his chapter on the works (702–03). Murray only mentions the merels problems in the two works briefly in his *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 45. Willard Fiske discusses the merels problems in each work in slightly more detail in his *Chess in Iceland* (Florence: Florentine Typographical Society, 1905), 104–06. More recent histories of Nine men's morris mention either work only in passing. See, for example, Bell, *Board and Table Games* (see note 63), 94; Endrei and Zolnay, *Fun and Games* (see note 82), 67; David Partlett, *The Oxford History of Board Games* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 119; and Walker, *Historic Board Games* (see note 70), 97–98.

101 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 10286, fols. 173r–184v; online at: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000238t> (last accessed on Jan 27, 2019).

102 The Latin names for the symbols are: luna, stella, scutum, crux, quadratus, and rotundus. See Fiske, *Chess in Iceland* (see note 100), 105.

Murray rates the morris problems in both the *Bonius Socius* and the *Civis Bononiae* very highly: some, he writes, “are very ingenious, and I think that they leave a more favorable impression of the ingenuity of the medieval composer than is the case with the problems of chess or tables.”¹⁰³ Other board game historians are not as charitable. Willard Fiske, for example, complains that there are no instructions: “none of the solutions given,” he writes, “help us more than very slightly as to the character of the play.”¹⁰⁴ “We are told,” he continues, “that the gold takes the moon or that the red captures a cross, but by what sort of movement this action is performed, we cannot always even guess.”¹⁰⁵ The fundamental issue, according to Fiske, is one of arithmetic: even allowing for the reuse of round and square, as happens in several solutions, six symbols are not enough to account for all nine of a player's potential pieces, at least not individually.¹⁰⁶ Over the years, scholars have come up with a wide variety of explanations for this apparent shortage. For his part, Fiske speculates that the *Bonius Socius* and the *Civis Bononiae* document a six-piece variation of the game, perhaps one played with named pieces “after the manner of those used in chess,” while David Partlett writes that the various symbols might refer to “configurations of pieces” rather than individual pieces or that the symbols may have had astrological significance or may have been merely decorative.¹⁰⁷ Most recently, Damian Gareth Walker has argued that the symbols are “some form of notation, showing the order of placement or facilitating particular mention of certain pieces in the text.”¹⁰⁸

If anything, the solutions in both works are efficient to a fault. Interested in teaching players how to master the game, each solution assumes that the reader already knows the game and treats only the final turns of the game's movement phase, using the symbols assigned to each of the pieces and the letters drawn on the game board to detail potential moves and countermoves. For instructions on how to play Nine men's morris, the only medieval source that remains is the late-thirteenth-century Spanish *Libro de los juegos*, which survives in a single copy in Spain's El Escorial Library.¹⁰⁹ Much of the *Libro* is dedicated to chess, which it

103 Murray, *History of Chess* (see note 64), 703.

104 Fiske, *Chess in Iceland* (see note 100), 106.

105 Fiske, *Chess in Iceland* (see note 100), 106.

106 Fiske, *Chess in Iceland* (see note 100), 105.

107 Fiske, *Chess in Iceland* (see note 100), 105–06; here 105; Partlett, *Board Games* (see note 100), 119.

108 Walker, *Historic Board Games* (see note 70), 98.

109 On the dating, composition, and provenance of the *Libro de los juegos*, see Musser, “Los libros” (see note 74), 30–35; and Olivia Remie Constable, “Chess and Courtly Culture in Medieval Castile: The *Libro de ajedrez* of Alfonso X, el Sabio,” *Speculum* 82.2 (April, 2007): 301–47; here 302.

calls the “most noble of games,” but it also documents dice games and backgammon, and its penultimate treatise describes five types of mill games, including two variations of what it calls *alquerque de nueue* [“Nine men’s morris”], one played “with dice” and the other played “without them like chess.”¹¹⁰ The *Libro* prefaces its description of the variations of *alquerque de nueue* with a general account of the game’s board and pieces and its relation to tables and chess. Brief accounts of each variant then follow. First comes a description of the game as it is played with dice, followed by a description of the game as played “without dice by skill.”¹¹¹ Each of these two descriptions is followed by an illustration depicting the game and its gameplay. In the first illustration four figures, two kneeling and two standing, flank a large board of type F. The kneeling figures are playing the game, while the standing figures (who both hold spears) look on, perhaps offering advice.¹¹² The player on the left is rolling three dice onto the board, while the player on the right holds one of his pieces, perhaps in anticipation of his turn. In the second illustration, two seated players flank a large game board, also of type F. The first player reaches toward the board with his right hand, while the second player looks on, holding one of his pieces in his left hand.¹¹³

Of the two variants, the second seems to correspond to the game as it is played today, though it is worth noting that the *Libro* treats this variant as more of a game of placement than of movement. The first variation has proved difficult to reconstruct, and there is an ongoing debate as to how it may have been played. Most scholars conclude that dice were used in the game’s placement phase, and that the game’s movement phase worked as it does today.¹¹⁴ Murray argues that rolling a 6–5–4, 6–3–3, 5–2–2, or 4–1–1 during the game’s

110 Constable, “Chess and Courtly Culture” (see note 109), 316. The *Libro* is made of seven treatises. The first (and longest) treats chess, while the second and third treat dice games and tables, respectively. The fourth and fifth treatises describe variants of chess and tables, and the sixth treatise documents *alquerque* or “mill” games. The work’s final treatise contains astrological accounts of checkers and tables. See Musser, “Los libros” (see note 74), 37–39. The sixth treatise, the “Libro del alquerque,” documents these five mill games, respectively: *alquerque de doze* [“twelve men’s morris”], *Cercar la liebre* [“capture the rabbit”], *Alquerque de nueue con dados* [“Nine Men’s Morris with dice”], *Alquerque de nueue* [“Nine men’s morris”], and *Alquerque de tres* [“three mills”]. For a detailed description of the sixth treatise, its contents, and its historical reception, see Musser, “Los libros” (see note 74), 595–612. Musser’s work also includes a translation of the *Libro*’s sixth treatise (623–27), which we rely upon here (625).

111 Musser, “Los libros” (see note 74), 626.

112 Grunfeld, *Games of the World* (see note 62), 60; Musser, “Los libros” (see note 74), 1027–28.

113 Musser, “Los libros” (see note 74), 1029–30.

114 Ulrich Schädler, “Medieval Nine-Men’s Morris with Dice,” *Board Game Studies* 3 (2000): 112–16; here 113.

placement phase afforded “the thrower the right to enter a row of three men and to capture one, or, if another row is produced with men already entered, two of the opponent’s men,” while Bell argues that one of the four lucky rolls “gave the caster the right to break into an enemy mill and capture a piece, in addition to introducing one of his own pieces on to the board, and if a mill was formed with this piece he removed two of the opponent’s men.”¹¹⁵ Ulrich Schädler, however, has recently argued, based on a close reading of the illustration accompanying the text, that dice were used to speed up the game’s movement phase.¹¹⁶ According to Schädler, the four special throws entitled the player “to form a line of three by an otherwise not allowed leap of any of his pieces to the third point” during the game’s movement phase.¹¹⁷ Of the three interpretations, Bell’s has been widely criticized as not being supported by the *Libro*’s text, while Murray’s is still widely accepted among scholars of the game.¹¹⁸ Schädler’s interpretation, though, seems equally compelling.

Yet for all of this, it is difficult to ascertain whether the *Libro*’s account of Nine men’s morris played with dice attests to a wider medieval tradition. None of the morris problems in the *Civis Bononiae* or the *Bonus Socius* account for the use of dice. Murray and Schädler, however, note that the mid-thirteenth-century pseudo-Ovidian *De Vetula* alludes to a version of nine-men’s morris that could be played “cum deciis et eis sine quando volunt” [“with dice or without them if they want to”]¹¹⁹:

Where (one plays with) twice six (pieces), one captures the one of the enemy’s pieces, over which another piece leaps, and here the throw of the dice is not applied; but where (one plays with) nine (pieces), they play well with dice or without if they want to, but one captures this piece or that of the enemy’s, which one wants, when one manages to bring three of one’s own pieces into a continuous line.¹²⁰

115 Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 46; Bell, *Board Games* (see note 63), 94.

116 Schädler, “Medieval Nine-Men’s Morris” (see note 114), 114–15.

117 Schädler, “Medieval Nine-Men’s Morris” (see note 114), 115.

118 Musser, “Los libros” (see note 74), 605–06; Schädler, “Medieval Nine-Men’s Morris” (see note 114), 113.

119 Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 46; Schädler, “Medieval Nine-Men’s Morris” (see note 114), 112. For the Latin text of the *De Vetula*, see Paul Klopsch, *Pseudo-Ovidius de Vetula: Untersuchungen und Text*. Mittellateinische Studien und Texte, 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 217, lines 636–48; here line 644. On the dating and authorship of *De Vetula*, see Dorothy Robathan, “Introduction to the Pseudo-Ovidian *De Vetula*,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 88 (1957): 197–207.

120 This prose translation of lines 641–46 comes from Schädler, “Medieval Nine-Men’s Morris” (see note 114), 112.

This account of the game is too brief to be of much use in reconstructing either variant, but, when considered alongside that of the *Libro*, it does suggest that two relatively distinct, yet equally popular versions of the game were in circulation, at least in the mid-to-late thirteenth century. Walker has recently claimed that the dice version of the game “seems to have disappeared after the 13th century,” but he does so only in passing and without any discussion of the evidence or rationale for this claim.¹²¹

It is worth noting that Jean Le Fèvre’s late-fourteenth-century translation of the *De Vetula* into Old French, *La Vieille*, retains mention of both versions of the game.¹²² Le Fèvre’s translation follows the Latin closely, but he is not translating blindly. He inserts a sentence, for example, noting that the games discussed in the passage are called “merelles” – again, the catch-all term for a variety of medieval mill games.¹²³ This qualification suggests that Le Fèvre considers both varieties of the game to be current. However, Le Fèvre also prefaces the passage with a header stating that it discusses “Gieu des merelles auquel souloient anciennement jouer les pucelles” (“games of merelles which were enjoyed in ancient days by young girls”), so it is unclear whether Le Fèvre retains mention of both versions because both are still in circulation or out of consideration of the Pseudo Ovidian *De Vetula*’s apparent antiquity.¹²⁴

121 Walker, *Historic Board Games* (see note 70), 97. Walker cites Murray’s, *History of Board Games* here (97, note 9), but his citation refers to Murray’s discussion of the *Libro de los juegos*. For his part, Murray notes that “the dice variety is not mentioned in any later Spanish works,” but that “the *Vetula*... and its French translation, *La Vieille*, mention the dice variety.” See Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 46.

122 Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 46. For Le Fèvre’s text, see *La Vieille, ou les dernières amours d’Ovide*, ed. Hippolyte Cocheris (Paris: Aubry, 1861), 86, lines 1735–52. On the text and its relation to the *De Vetula* see Geneviève Hasenohr, “Jean Le Fèvre,” *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises: Le Moyen Âge*, nouv. éd. (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 802–04; and Robert L. A. Clark, “Culture Loves a Void: Eunuchry in *De Vetula* and Jean Le Fèvre’s *La Vieille*,” *Castration and Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. Larissa Tracy (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2013), 280–94; here 282–83.

123 “Ces gieuз sont nommez aux merelles, / Dont jouvenceaulx et jouvencelles / Se jueunt dessus une table” (1739–41; These games are called merelles, which young boys and girls play on a table”). This is our translation.

124 Le Fèvre, *La Vieille* (see note 122), 86. Cocheris does not assign the header a line number.

Joseph Strutt's Merrie England: Reimagining the National, Ludic Past

Neither the *De Vetula* nor the *Libro* nor the *Bonus Socius* nor any of the other works discussed above can tell us conclusively how the game might have been played in a pub that may or may not have been the Trip to Jerusalem in late-twelfth-century Nottinghamshire by Robin Hood and Old Harry or their equivalents. Nor can they address the game's apparent pre-medieval origins. Nevertheless, they are the best witnesses we have to the uncertainties surrounding the game, and, as such, trouble Marx's account of a single version of the game as "authentically" medieval in two significant ways: firstly, and most obviously, they each attest to two versions of game. Secondly, and perhaps more profoundly, the interpretive challenges posed by these works remind us that much of our understanding of how the game was played in the Middle Ages relies on our experience of how the game is played today. Murray, for example, claims that the game is "described fully" by the *Libro*, but would either of the *Libro*'s accounts of the game make sense absent longstanding contemporary traditions of how the game is played?¹²⁵

The simple answer is that we privilege what we already know. As Thomas writes about ruins, Harry's board is ultimately not a witness to the game's past, but, paradoxically, to the past as it is imagined to exist in the present.¹²⁶ Harry's board, in other words, represents a popular, contemporary consensus about the game's past, which is to say, a consensus about how it should be played in the present, whether in digital form as the game appears in *Conquests of the Longbow* or on the physical board included with the game's packaging. Yet as becomes clear from what we know about the game's medieval provenance, Harry's board also represents an effacement of details from the historical record that are uncertain, contradictory, or otherwise troubling. Or more precisely, it represents a tradition of effacement, one that, arguably reaches back much further than the many sources that Marx cites in the brief bibliography at the end of *Conquests of the Longbow* manual.¹²⁷

These works, up to and including *Conquests of the Longbow*, arguably, have an antecedent in both substance and approach in Joseph Strutt's, *Glig-Gamena*

125 Murray, *History of Board Games* (see note 63), 45.

126 Thomas, *Romanticism and Visuality* (see note 59), 80.

127 Marx, *Conquests Manual* (see note 32), 24–25.

Angel-Deod: Or, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England.¹²⁸ First published in 1801 and updated and reprinted until 1903, Strutt's work is as exhaustive as it is ambitious. As his subtitle indicates, Strutt promises readers a complete account of the "rural and domestic recreations, May games, mummeries, shows, processions, pageants, and pompous spectacles" of medieval England "from the "earliest period" onward."¹²⁹ To this end, he organizes his work in accordance with an hierarchical and idealized vision of medieval English society, one that, as Agata Maćków writes, was largely inspired by a renewed Enlightenment interest in folk culture and the national past.¹³⁰

Strutt begins his survey, for example, with the traditions that, in the antiquarian imagination, were most threatened by the large-scale economic and demographic changes taking place – namely, with the sports and pastimes that he identifies, in book one, with the rural aristocracy: hunting, hawking, and horse racing. Strutt dedicates the second book of his volume to pastimes of the rural common people – archery, stone-slinging, and handball – and, in the third book, describes the types of games and leisure activities that he associates with "towns and cities, or places adjoining to them."¹³¹ Strutt concludes his work in book four by cataloging the "domestic amusements of various kinds; and pastimes appropriated to particular seasons."¹³² Strutt thus reproduces, through the topical organization of his work, a distinctly romantic vision of the Middle Ages, one in which the inherent nobility of the rural English countryside becomes increasingly diluted and is finally domesticated and made sedentary within the close confines of the cities and towns.

Strutt's work is best understood, in this sense, not simply as a catalog or a compendium, but as Umberto Eco writes about the medievalist impulse in general, an attempt to understand the "neuroses" of the present via a "careful investigation of the primal scene" of the medieval past.¹³³ Strutt explicitly acknowledges this project in the introduction of his book. In a move that anticipates Johan Huizinga's assertion that play lies at the root of culture, Strutt declares that "[i]n order to form a just estimation of the character of any particular people, it is absolutely necessary to investigate the Sports and Pastimes most gener-

¹²⁸ Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23).

¹²⁹ Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), title page.

¹³⁰ Agata Maćków, "Joseph Strutt – A Forgotten Ethnographer and Historian of Sport," *Studies in Physical Culture and Tourism* 14.1 (2007): 53–63; here 60.

¹³¹ Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), xii.

¹³² Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), xv.

¹³³ Umberto Eco, "Dreaming of the Middle Ages," id., *Travels in Hyperreality: Essays*, trans. William Weaver (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1986), 61–72; here 65.

ally prevalent among them.”¹³⁴ He then makes a case for studying the specific pastimes of England, writing that “[u]nfortunately, all of the information that remains respecting the ancient inhabitants of this island is derived from foreign writers partially acquainted with them as a people, and totally ignorant of their domestic customs and amusements.”¹³⁵ To Strutt, then, the medieval past represents both a resource and a remedy. It provides the key not only to identifying the primal values that have historically defined the British character, but of simultaneously coming to terms with what has been lost: quantifying the deleterious effects of enclosure and similar developments on the national character.

Strutt makes this point explicitly at the end of his introduction, in a section entitled “Archery succeeded by bowling.”¹³⁶ This section is strategically located after two sections detailing attempts to regulate gambling by a succession of medieval monarchs from Richard the Lionheart to Henry VIII and before a section lamenting the pervasive and deleterious impact of “Modern Gambling.” Accordingly, it provides an account of how, in Strutt’s words, “the evils” that were “then in their infancy ... have in the present day attained to a gigantic stature.”¹³⁷ As Strutt makes clear, the reason for this decline does not lie in a deficiency in the national character: the people of England have not, he asserts, lost their passion for archery and similar sports nor have they otherwise forsaken the martial values with which archery has long been associated.¹³⁸ Instead, he ascribes the “general decay of those manly and spirited exercises” to the larger economic changes that were transforming the once pastoral spaces surrounding England’s cities.¹³⁹ Noting that these sports were “formerly practiced in the vicinity of the metropolis,” he writes that many of the places that “in times past had been allotted to them are now covered with buildings, or shut up with enclosures.”¹⁴⁰ As he explains,

if it were not for skittles, dutch-pens, four-corners and the like pastimes, [military-aged men] would have no amusements for the exercise of the body; and these amusements are only to be met with in places belonging to common-drinking houses, for which reason

134 Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston, MA: Routledge, 1949), 1; Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), xvii.

135 Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), xviii.

136 Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), lxii.

137 Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), lxii–lxiv.

138 Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), lxiii.

139 Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), lxii.

140 Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), lxii.

their play is seldom productive of much benefit, but more frequently becomes the prelude to drunkenness and debauchery.¹⁴¹

To Strutt, then, the ills of the present are rooted in issues that initially emerged but were never properly addressed during the Middle Ages, which he represents as the nation's "infancy."¹⁴² The result, he argues, is a kind of negative progress, one in which the problems that originally concerned earlier commentators have been amplified "to a gigantic stature" by the uncertainties of industrialization and other pressures in the present.¹⁴³

The medieval past, however, also offers a way forward for Strutt. In keeping with Eco's formulation, it provides a means of acting on and ultimately correcting this diagnosis – of restoring the ostensibly timeless, heroic proclivities that are inherent in the Saxon title that Strutt gave the first edition of his work – *Glig-Gamena Angel-Deod, or the Sports and Pastimes of the English People* – via the expedient of the "modern" and quasi-empirical, belletristic project that Hugh Blair and other eighteenth-century intellectuals formulated as a means of leveraging the past to address what they perceived as the excesses of their time.¹⁴⁴ Viewed in this light, Strutt's work not only offers readers a chance to re-

141 Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), lxii; This view was widely accepted and appeared in subsequent works about the moral and physical decay of the English Character, including, among others, John Sinclair's *The Code of Health and Longevity*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: A. Constable & Co, 1807), 672.

142 Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), lxiii.

143 Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), lxiii–lxiv.

144 Thomas P. Miller, "The Rhetoric of Belles Lettres: The Political Context of the Eighteenth-Century Transition from Classical to Modern Cultural Studies," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 23.2 (1993): 1–19. As Miller argues, the belletristic movement was not as radical an undertaking as is sometimes imagined but was instead rooted in a desire on the part of Hugh Blair, George Campbell, Adam Smith, and others to initiate the emerging, moderate Scottish middle class into what they perceived as the dominant culture of England's ruling elite. To this end, they advocated the careful, empirical study of the canonical texts of the past as a means of not only mastering the intellectual and social performances they associated with English high culture, but of distancing themselves from the regional dialects and cultural practices that were associated with the Scottish working class, as well as more radical separatist political factions. As Miller notes, Blair and his contemporaries found a model for this project in the essays published in Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's short-lived, though highly influential periodical, *The Spectator*, which explicitly advocated literary pursuits as a means of achieving a presumably middle class and impartial subjectivity in the face of the political and economic turmoil of the times (9). While it might seem strange to associate Strutt's work with its conspicuous embrace of the Saxon language with the belletristic movement and its explicit disavowal of regional dialects, it is important to recognize that the Saxon language was not seen as a dialect but as the vestiges of a privileged and threatened heritage, one that Strutt sought to recover by applying

discover their national heritage through a careful, curated retrospective of a distinctly English ludic past, but, as Maćków, Ina Ferris, and others have pointed out, models a critical, literary, and historical methodology through which readers can themselves participate in this past: a kind of early sociological approach that Strutt explicitly positions as an antidote against foreign incursions and misrepresentations. The end result was, as Roy Strong writes, “for the very first time a picture of everyday life in England from the Anglo-Saxons down to the Tudor age.”¹⁴⁵

Yet as Ferris points out, if Strutt were able to accomplish this feat – if he succeeded, as Strong suggests, in “[piecing] together” a coherent account of daily life in medieval England – it was only because of his aptitude in “first pulling them apart.”¹⁴⁶ Ferris, in fact, argues that this is what Strutt should be remembered for – the degree to which his work popularized what she describes as one of the most problematic aspects of the antiquarian approach to the past: “a deliberate, even aggressive, disaggregation of the past” that, as she argues, was less interested in “preserving its remains than on turning the past itself into pieces.”¹⁴⁷ Indeed, as she writes, “Antiquarianism as a whole is notoriously a phenomenon of pieces and piecing” – a kind of “foraging” that, following Yoon Sun Lee’s work, approaches the past not as a continuum or a whole, but as “bits of discrete information” that could be combined and manipulated for rhetorical effect.¹⁴⁸ As evidence of this, she points to the work of Francis Douce who “notoriously removed individual leaves and cut out images from his manuscripts and early printed books, pasting them into scrapbooks in the hope of assembling a chronology for the history of dress” or to “elucidate refer-

(and thereby introducing his reading public to) many of the critical practices that Blair and his contemporaries extrapolated from the example of the *Spectator* and promulgated via pedagogy, public lectures, and literary societies. These societies would, in turn, provide a model for the antiquarian societies that, according to Ina Ferris, were inspired, in larger part, by Strutt’s work. See Ina Ferris, “Unhinging the Past: Joseph Strutt and the Antiquarian Poetics of the Piece,” *Romantic Antiquarianism*, ed. Noah Heringman and Crystal B. Lake (June 2014), para. 1; online at: <https://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/antiquarianism/praxis.antiquarianism.2014.ferris.html> (last accessed on Jan. 27, 2019).

145 Maćków, “Joseph Strutt” (see note 130), 53; Ferris, “Unhinging the Past” (see note 144), para. 2; Roy Strong, *And When Did You Last See Your Father?: The Victorian Painter and British History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 50.

146 Strong, *Your Father?* (see note 130), quoted in Ferris, “Unhinging the Past” (see note 144), para. 5; Ferris, “Unhinging the Past” (see note 144), para. 5.

147 Ferris, “Unhinging the Past” (see note 144), para. 5.

148 Ferris, “Unhinging the Past” (see note 144), para. 6; Yoon Sun Lee, *Nationalism and Irony: Burke, Scott, Carlyle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 77.

ences in literature from the past.”¹⁴⁹ While Ferris acknowledges that Strutt’s technique was not as explicitly destructive as Douce’s, she argues that a similar tendency nevertheless informs many aspects of Strutt’s work, including many of his most famous engravings, which, as Rosemary Mitchell points out, Strutt produced by painstakingly copying figures and illustrations from medieval manuscripts that were produced sometimes 500 years apart and then combining these on the page for aesthetic effect.¹⁵⁰

This strategy of, in Ferris’s words, “breaking up and moving around bits of the past” is arguably also apparent in Strutt’s description of “Merelles, or, as it was formerly called in England, nine men’s morris.”¹⁵¹ After acknowledging the antiquity of the game, Strutt offers readers his first artifact – the complete text of the definition that Randle Cotgrave published in his 1611 French-English dictionary. Although Strutt’s accepts Cotgrave’s summary of the game, he takes exception to the claim that Nine men’s morris is “boyish.”¹⁵² Strutt instead describes the game as essentially rural, asserting that “far from being confined to the practice of boys and girls,” it was “certainly much used by the shepherds formerly, and continues to be used by them, and other rustics, to the present hour.”¹⁵³ Strutt then gives the rules of the game. Referring to the design of a fourteenth-century merelles table (but of type G, not type F), which he reproduces for readers in plate 106 of his book, he describes what, as we discussed earlier, has become the accepted form as the game.¹⁵⁴ That accomplished, Strutt returns to the proto-ethnographic issue at the core of his disagreement with Cotgrave – that is, the question of where the game was primarily played and who primarily played it. As he explains, the rustics did not need a table, a board, or even pieces to play; they would dig lines into the ground and “then collect, as above mentioned, stones of different forms or colours for the pieces.”¹⁵⁵ He offers the third artifact of his description as evidence – Shakespeare’s allusion to the game in *A Midsummer’s Night Dream*, which, by way of conclusion, he cites in its entirety.¹⁵⁶

149 Ferris, “Unhinging the Past” (see note 144), para 6.

150 Ferris, “Unhinging the Past” (see note 144), para 7; Rosemary Mitchell. *Picturing the Past: English History in Text and Image 1830–1870* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 64.

151 Ferris, “Unhinging the Past” (see note 144), para 8; Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), 317.

152 Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), 317.

153 Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), 317.

154 Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), 317–18.

155 Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), 318.

156 Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes* (see note 23), 318.

Strutt thus makes the game medieval. Working backwards from what he implicitly presents as Cotgrave's seventeenth-century misrepresentation of the game as boyish, he offers readers an account that is demonstrably more detailed and comprehensive and therefore, more authentic – an account that, in keeping with Ferris's critique of antiquarian practice, is simultaneously grounded in and which links together in a coherent vision the two otherwise disparate artifacts that Strutt reproduces as evidence: the physical arrangement of the fourteenth-century gaming table and the specific lines of Shakespeare's literary reference. In doing so, Strutt transforms “merelles” into Nine men's morris. He transforms what, in the beginning of his description, is a relatively contemporary French and boyish game into one, that, in the concluding citation from Shakespeare, embodies what he elsewhere defines as the essential, rural character that informs his distinctly romantic and pastoral vision of the medieval past – which is to say, the sense of *noblesse oblige* that, in even in its most rustic, barbaric form, invigorates the pastimes and play of the English people.

Encrypting the Past: Antiquarianism as Gameplay

While it is tempting to see Strutt's approach as quaint and outdated, the underlying discursive logic that informs his work is still very much with us. Marx, in fact, implicitly represents her design process in these terms in the postmortem published in the game's hint book. Telling readers that she was “delighted” to be asked to make a game about Robin Hood because he has “always been one of my favorite heroes,” she describes the game as an outgrowth of her love of the “Medieval time period in general” and her larger obsession with the past.¹⁵⁷ “I'm fascinated with the details of how people lived their lives,” she writes, “how they thought and acted, what they ate and wore, and so on. I'm fascinated with ruins, by ancient writing, and by tantalizing hints of lost knowledge.”¹⁵⁸ Accordingly, she describes her design process in much of the same way that, according to Ferris, Strutt and his fellow antiquarians understood their work, as an exercise in authentically reimagining Robin Hood through the quasi-scholarly expedient of, in her words, “mix[ing] legend and history” – of studiously researching, copying, and ultimately reassembling the component pieces of centuries of cultural production to produce a version of the medi-

157 Marx, “A Game is Born” (see note 20), 4

158 Marx, “A Game is Born” (see note 20), 4

eval past that is not only coherent, believable, and recognizable, but also somehow better, an improvement over everything that came before.¹⁵⁹

Marx makes this point explicitly when she discusses her decision to “incorporate a lot of my research into the Druids” in addition to what she represents as standard elements “grabbed ... directly from the old Robin Hood ballads,” from materials obtained from the “historical library of Nottingham,” and from “fanciful ballads written about King Richard, which featured an amazing mishmash of historical battles and wildly improbable adventures.”¹⁶⁰ As she explains, this choice was ultimately motivated by a desire to remedy what she saw as an oversight in the traditional tales:

Why the Druids? Because one of the biggest characters in the Robin Hood legends is one that is most often ignored – the forest itself. The forest was the only thing that made the existence of the medieval outlaw possible ... No law-abiding citizen was allowed to help the outlaw in any way. No town or village or dwelling was supposed to admit him. There was nothing left except the forest. The Druids worshipped many trees and had lots of forest lore that fit beautifully with my desire to make Sherwood Forest something more than a mere backdrop. And also gave me the special twist I wanted for Marian.¹⁶¹

While there is much to be said for Marx’s choice to make Marian a fuller and more interesting character, she nevertheless justifies this decision via the same positivist logic that informs Strutt’s work and that of many of his antiquarian contemporaries: the idea that gaps or omissions in the historical record are not interesting or revealing in their own right, but instead represent opportunities for improvement and correction via the ostensibly more enlightened tools, techniques, and technologies of the modern era.¹⁶²

Conquests of the Longbow also implicates players in this discursive logic. Explicitly advertised as an exercise in “logic, creativity, and moral judgement,” the game invites players to participate in a version of the medieval past that is explicitly imagined as a puzzle – an immense assemblage of locations, characters,

159 Marx, “A Game is Born” (see note 20), 4.

160 Marx, “A Game is Born” (see note 20), 9, 6.

161 Marx, “A Game is Born” (see note 20), 9–10.

162 As Marx also makes clear, producing the game is at much a technological endeavor as anything else. It is a matter of leveraging the potentials of contemporary, globalized production, including a number of “animation studios overseas in such places [as] Japan, France, Korea, Ireland, and Australia,” to convert “three 3-inch binders and two 2-inch binders that are packed full of hundreds of pages of documentation” into “1,500 separate pieces of animation for the game and 81 pictures,” not to mention the work of producing the game’s musical score, its “over three-hundred sound effects,” and, of course, the “months of hard work writing the code that makes it all come together as a game.” Marx, “A Game is Born” (see note 20), 14, 16, 17.

objects, and events that, when seen in their totality, promises to make the past real, which is to say, new for players.¹⁶³ Players quickly discover, however, that they cannot do as they wish with these pieces. Although they can refuse to take Robin out of his cave or spend hours, if not days practicing archery, exploring the forest, or in any number of similar pursuits, the game expects them to make progress: to make meaning and therefore history from the otherwise disparate materials and traditions that, as Marx relates in her postmortem, give flavor and texture to the past. Anything less results in stopping the game's clock, or worse yet, turning it backwards, as is the case when players are forced to restore the game after each of Robin's untimely deaths. *Conquests of the Longbow* thus asks players to position themselves vis-à-vis Marx's doubled accomplishments as a game designer, author, and a historian in much of the same way that, according to Ferris, Strutt's compendiums of medieval dress and sports and pastimes simultaneously challenged and inspired generations of readers.¹⁶⁴ It interpellates them as modern and high-tech subjects and scores them on their ability to demonstrate "compassion as well as wits and cunning" through the ludic equivalent of the larger historical methodology that Marx explicitly acknowledges and models for readers in the game's manual and hint book.¹⁶⁵

What is more, *Conquests of the Longbow* translates these imperatives into gameplay via the unique sense of connection and disconnection that Giappone ascribes to the third-person, point-and-click interface of graphical adventure games in general, but which arguably has a cognate in the ideal of distance and objectivity that is everywhere present in what, quoting Anne Rowland, Ferris describes as the "interplay of 'childhood attachment' and 'adult scholarly practice' through which [Strutt] modeled a modern approach to texts of the past, a reading at once affective and yet properly critical. ..." ¹⁶⁶

This discursive logic, however, finds its perhaps ultimate incarnation in *Conquests of the Longbow's* copy-protection scheme. In an attempt to curtail what Marx represents as the moral and commercial scourge of software piracy, the game includes several puzzles that require players to variously interpret clues contained in its manual as a means of demonstrating that they own a legitimate copy. Before players can enter the Monastery of the Fens, for example, they must "prove [their] knowledge of the lore of the gemstones" to a black-clad monk who stands menacingly in the monastery's arched entrance. Blocking their way with

163 *Conquests Game Box* (see note 18), back cover.

164 Ferris, "Unhinging the Past" (see note 144), para. 2.

165 *Conquests Game Box* (see note 18), back cover.

166 Giappone, "Adventure Games" (see note 43), para. 24; Ferris, "Unhinging the Past" (see note 144), para. 13.

a quarterstaff, the monk demands that players answer three riddles by correctly choosing the gemstone that corresponds to the clues he gives. The key to answering these riddles lies in a lavishly illustrated chart published in the manual. Featuring illuminated letters, intricate borders, and a brightly colored griffon in the margins, this chart lists the traits associated with each gemstone below an image of the stones as they appear in the game.¹⁶⁷ Yet as players discover to their chagrin, solving the gatekeeper's riddles is not a simple matter of matching the clues he gives with exact phrases published in the manual. As with Strutt's work with the medieval manuscripts he discovered in the British Library and elsewhere, players must instead use the ostensibly authentic documentary evidence from the manual as a kind of interpretive guide, one that does not always provide the obvious solution to the puzzle of the past, but which nevertheless provides them with the component pieces that, if excerpted and proffered in the correct order, verifies their right to participate in and consume its mysteries.

In this regard, *Conquests of the Longbow* quite literally encrypts the past, to borrow Biddick's formulation.¹⁶⁸ Billing itself as "Sierra's richest, most complex game yet," it offers player a chance to intervene meaningfully in what Marx represents as the larger historicist problematics of Robin Hood and his times.¹⁶⁹ *Conquests of the Longbow*, however, only extends this privilege to those who can demonstrate their relationship to the ostensibly authentic original through their mastery of the prescribed relationship to the past as it is simultaneously manifested in Marx's authorial praxis, through the third-person mechanics of the game's point-and-click interface, and in the quasi-historical riddles that constitute the game's copy protection scheme. As Ferris writes about antiquarianism in general, the game facilitates this project by "[unrooting] the past," by making it portable and "modular."¹⁷⁰ As she explains,

The impersonal antiquarian piece ... rendered the past not simply alien but alienable, something that could be moved about. Where the abstraction carried out by the "antiquarian formalism" of literary collections absorbed the past into the present through a quasi-anthropological notion of an enduring deep memory, the abstraction characteristic of illustrated histories of social and everyday life unrooted the past to render it modular, allowing it to become a platform for experiment, imitation, and performance in the present.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Marx, *Conquests Manual* (see note 32), 10.

¹⁶⁸ Biddick, *Shock of Medievalism* (see note 10), 38–43.

¹⁶⁹ *Conquests Game Box* (see note 18), back cover.

¹⁷⁰ Ferris, "Unhinging the Past" (see note 144), para. 14.

¹⁷¹ Ferris, "Unhinging the Past" (see note 144), para. 14.

Conquests of the Longbow, however, goes a step further. Working through the affordances of its high-tech interface, it constructs Robin Hood's Middle Ages as a series of "intricate and challenging puzzles," many of which "have multiple solutions with varying implications."¹⁷² In doing so, the game puts the past into play. Boasting more "puzzles than any previous Sierra adventure game" and "at least five possible endings," it constructs history and, indeed, historiography as an immense game, a predefined field of operations in which predefined pieces may be arranged and manipulated in accordance with predefined rules to achieve a multiplicity of outcomes.¹⁷³

This is not to say, however, that anything goes – that as Michel Foucault writes in the *Archeology of Knowledge*, "historical descriptions are necessarily ordered by the present state of knowledge, they increase with every transformation and never cease, in turn, to break with themselves."¹⁷⁴

Although *Conquests of the Longbow* implicitly constructs the past as variable and open to play, it also recognizes that not all of these outcomes are equal – that, as the back of its game box makes clear, "some [are] more desirable than others."¹⁷⁵ In keeping with Ferris's critique of antiquarianism, the game constructs the past not only as a puzzle that can be solved, but also as one that must be solved, if for no other reason than to guard against what, in the introduction to his work, Strutt decries as foreign misrepresentations, however these might be construed.¹⁷⁶ *Conquests of the Longbow* thus forecloses upon the past even as it celebrates its possibilities. It promises players a "breathtaking adventure" in a world that is authentically constructed by "[blending] history, legend, and pure magic," yet structures their participation so that the only way that they can experience this adventure in its fullest – reach the end of a the game with a maximum score of 7400/7400 points – is by mastering the underlying historical and ludic strategies that, as discussed above, constitute what the game privileges as the winning strategy.¹⁷⁷ The irony, of course, is that players can only do so by systematically dismantling the past, by working backwards quest by quest and clue by clue to reduce all of the mystery, magic, and uncertainty of Robin Hood's Middle Ages to the desiccated skeleton of the narrative that they probably already knew before they even started the game.

172 *Conquests Game Box* (see note 18), back cover.

173 *Conquests Game Box* (see note 18), back cover.

174 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. from the French by A. M. Sheridan Smith (1969; New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 5.

175 *Conquests Game Box* (see note 18), back cover.

176 Ferris, "Unhinging the Past" (see note 144), para. 14.

177 *Conquests Game Box* (see note 18), back cover.

What *Conquests of Longbow* recovers, in this sense, is not Robin Hood, Nine men's morris, twelfth-century Nottingham, or any of the other fictional or historical elements that Marx incorporates into the game. As Ferris writes about antiquarianism in general, all of these things are a means to the end.¹⁷⁸ What the game recovers instead is the larger tradition of displacement and effacement through which Strutt, his contemporaries, and their imitators produced a succession of more or less coherent versions of the past by piecing together otherwise heterogeneous fragments, regardless of differences, gaps in the historical record, or any other circumstances that might complicate their underlying political, economic, and aesthetic agendas. *Conquests of the Longbow* very much works within this tradition. It privileges as play the discursive practices that inform the underlying praxis of medievalization – the textual and, in Strutt's case, belletristic logic through which the past can be authentically subordinated to the needs of the present. In doing so, the game paradoxically offers players a way forward. As becomes clear with Old Harry and his morris board in the Trip to Jerusalem Pub, it teaches them how to master the past – how to come to terms with and vanquish any unseemly elements that, like Harry himself, might otherwise mar its picturesque potential. The game thus teaches players how to keep the past at bay: how to secure for themselves some degree of protection – an amethyst or some similar, symbolic token – that allows them (as presumably modern subjects) to revisit the past in the future without succumbing to its intoxicating pleasures.

178 Ferris, "Unhinging the Past" (see note 144), para. 14.

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